

1 August, 2018

Dear Partners in Ministry,

It is that time of the year when we enter into deeper conversation and prayer with one another as we review the work God has called us to do in our local communities in service of Gospel- lives gathered, redeemed, transformed and sent in Christ's name

Again, this year, the process of applying for a grant, administered by the Congregations Commission, will be accompanied by a visit by your Commission Liaison. Later, this summer your liaison will meet with the key leaders of your congregation to talk about your answers to the questions listed below. Your liaison will type up your answers and send them back to you for edits. Then will submit your answers on **September 15, 2018** at which time you will submit the attached application along with the regular supporting documents. You will receive a reply by mid-October.

The hope is that two on-site conversations with your liaison will strengthen our relationships and understanding of your ministry context.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us.

God's Blessings,

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Questions to ponder for the on-site meeting:

1) What is your average pledge for fiscal year 2017? (Take your total received pledges in 2017, not including plate or other gifts and divide by the number of pledging households)

2) Congregations in our diocese may be divided into these categories. Where would you put your congregation? Why?

- **Poised to Transition Congregations** are strong and healthy; they are not or should not be receiving any vitality grants, stable leadership lay and ordained (part or full time); they hopefully will attain parish status soon, may need a transition period to take on all property responsibilities.
- **Witnessing Congregations** are strong, healthy congregations with stable lay and ordained leadership (part or full time); they provide ministry to a group of people who would not otherwise have an Episcopal presence, may have good stewardship, but are unlikely to be financially independent soon.
- **Stable and... Congregations** are doing ministry with the resources they have and that may be going well; they may not be able to afford or attract full or part-time clergy, they may or may not be willing to change or adapt, if the leadership leaves or they lose a family or two, they will be struggling.
- **Struggling/In Transition Congregations** are struggling to do ministry with limited resources, and/or they lack lay or ordained leadership, they are may not be able to afford or attract full or part-time clergy.

3) What are the fruits of your love and labor?