

Pathways to Vitality

Report to Diocesan Convention Prepared by Melissa Hickman, Program Director, October 2016

The Pathways to Vitality Initiative is completing the first year of a three-year grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. The overall purpose of the initiative is to create vital and sustainable congregations through financial literacy, innovative programming and grant making. We have made considerable progress in 12 months in achieving the following goals.

Goal #1: To create a culture of transparency regarding clergy and parish finances in our congregations

- Launched the initiative in April at the Spring Clergy Conference featuring speaker and activities focused on the unique financial opportunities and challenges of clergy.
- Launched the initiative to the entire Diocese at the Spring Leadership Conference featuring certified financial advisor, Pete the Planner, and Lilly Endowment program director, Bishop Richard Foss.
- Built and launched www.pathwaystovitality.org — a financial literacy resource for entire Diocese.
- Assisted in promoting the Church Pension Fund's Clergy Wellness Conference and Planning for Tomorrow Lay Staff Conference both in August.
- Collaborated with the Episcopal Church Foundation on programming and content.

Goal #2: To enhance ministerial innovation, vitality and sustainability in our congregations

- Postponed the launch of the Pathways Pilot Parish program until June 2017 to provide the new Bishop with the opportunity to be engaged in the work if he/she chooses.
- Initiated a comprehensive national search for a Pathways Priest to serve as a resident resource among the Pilot Parishes. The target start date is June 2017 coinciding with the start of the Pilot Parish program.
- Developed position description and compensation overview for Pathways Priest.
- Initiated search for a consultant to direct the development of curriculum for the Pilot Parishes.

Goal #3: To create a Ministerial Excellence Fund (MEF) to provide appropriate support to clergy and their families to enhance their financial wellbeing

- Created and adopted policies and application process for Ministerial Excellence Fund grants.
- Awarded one emergency grant and are in the process of considering three more.
- Created a relationship with Lisa Brown, a certified financial advisor, to help clergy grantees develop long-term financial plans.
- Conducted Diocesan survey of stipendiary clergy to determine total amount of seminary debt.
- Secured a lead gift of \$50,000 from the Diocese authorized by the Executive Council to assist in meeting our obligation to raise \$250,000 in matching funds required by Lilly Endowment.

Many heartfelt thanks to members of the Pathways Steering Committee and the MEF Grant Committee for their time and dedication to this important work. Our progress would not be possible without them!