

# Equipping congregations for strategic local mission: \$4.5<sup>million</sup>

IF OUR CONGREGATIONS, ESPECIALLY THOSE IN PLACES of both great need and real potential, are to minister effectively, witness vibrantly and flourish where they are planted, then we need to equip them with strong leadership and innovative outreach and program support in partnership with others.”

—BISHOP SHAW

**T**OGETHER we will empower our congregations to respond effectively to their changing communities so they might continue as beacons of Christ’s light to the people of eastern Massachusetts across boundaries of race and class, generation and language.

#### HOW ARE WE CALLED TO SERVE?

All communities in our diocese find themselves in the midst of a complexity of economic, cultural, social and religious change. Our cities have been centers for growth throughout our diocese’s 227-year history, yet today’s changing demographics in cities and towns alike call our congregations to open themselves to that growth by proclaiming the good news of God in Christ in new and relevant ways. Places of greatest growth and potential are often the most underresourced. No longer can any of our congregations go it alone, and the wonderful gift of being Episcopal churches belonging to one another in a diocesan community means that none need go it alone. Building on ministry initiatives that already demonstrate enormous success, we will increase congregational capacity by strengthening existing partnerships and widening outreach so that our congregations will together be the inviting, forming, sending and serving presences in their communities that God calls them to be.

#### HOW WILL WE ANSWER?

Our Together Now campaign will enable us, over the next five years, to direct significant resources to at least six “mission hubs” across the diocese—from the North Shore to Greater Boston and Metro-West, from the South Coast and Cape and Islands to the Merrimack Valley. Leadership, outreach and program resources located in hub congregations will draw collaboration among and return benefits to neighboring congregations and deaneries. Like trees planted beside a river, they will bear fruit for all. Hub congregations will be chosen based on potential for growth, a plan for partnership with other congregations and organizations and willingness to take advantage of the full spectrum of diocesan resources that will build local capacity and ensure sustainability of ministries beyond the five-year campaign funding period.

We expect that these hubs will stimulate congregational vitality across the geographic scope of our diocese as they assist neighboring congregations in their discernment and carrying out of God’s mission in their particular contexts.



## Specifically, we will:

### **Allocate \$3.5 million for Mission Hubs that will:**

- Provide an Urban Resident to serve as an assistant under an experienced priest, to build congregational life and serve the needs of city congregations.
- Equip hub congregations to host a community of four to six Life Together interns, young adults who live in intentional community homes and are immersed in the arts of sharing personal narrative and community organizing for the work of social justice and inviting young adult involvement in congregations. *(Hub interns will be partially funded through the Raising Up New Generations allocation, described in the next section.)*
- Assist hub congregations in establishing their own B-SAFE (Bishop's Summer Academic and Fun Enrichment) program sites as extensions of this highly successful ministry that brings volunteers together in transformational partnerships to meet city children's need for a safe and caring environment in which to thrive.
- Introduce hub congregations to new leadership models through participation in the Leadership Development Initiative, a collaborative partnership between clergy, trained lay leaders and organizers to develop the tools needed to effectively share the Gospel in a contextually appropriate way and develop leaders who are change agents.

- Initiate local campus ministry, working with state and local community colleges as well as private institutions.

### **Allocate \$1 million for a Mission Institute:**

- In the spirit of cooperative partnerships, our diocese will join with Episcopal City Mission and Episcopal Divinity School to found a mission institute to provide contextual training in practical areas such as congregational development, stewardship, justice work and spiritual formation.
- Using the latest communication technology, it will also host conferences and larger gatherings for broadly based conversation about congregational ministry in the 21st century and training for advocacy and leadership development, all in an effort to strengthen each of our congregations as they seek to be vital communities of faith.