

Collaborative Fundraising Working Group Report to Annual Council 2013

In developing the Diocesan operating budget proposal for 2014, Bishop Wright invited the various diocesan ministries into conversation regarding how “we as a ministry group [can] partner together to overcome the challenge of finite resources.” At the second of these conversations, several participants agreed to explore of how we might collaborate with respect to our fundraising efforts, while recognizing that broader collaboration already exists as we work together within the diocesan structure. This group has met twice and will meet once more before Council. It consists of Ginny Heckel (Episcopal Charities Foundation), Arthur Villarreal and Janet Tidwell (Macon ministries), Chuck Dale (Budget Committee), Greg Cole and Claiborne Jones (Emmaus House), Matthew Collins, Cozette Tanner, and Mike Tanner (Holy Comforter), Ken Struble and Mike McAuliffe (Camp Mikell), Beth King and Mary Wetzel (Church of the Common Ground), Bennie King (Diocesan Treasurer), Laura Bryant (The Road, Episcopal Service Corps), Lois Shingler (Peter & Paul’s House), and Vicky Partin (Chattahoochee Valley Episcopal Ministries). We invite others to join this effort.

The accomplishments of the group to date may be summarized as follows:

1. We have affirmed our shared faith that we live in God’s economy of abundance, and we reject the spirit of competition and the mentality of scarcity in our life together as ministries of the Diocese. We recognize too that God has blessed the people of the Diocese of Atlanta with extraordinary grace and abundant wealth (not for our own sakes but for the sake of God’s beloved world) and calls us, individually and communally, to faithful stewardship.
2. We believe that the work that God does through these various ministries, while it serves the needs of our constituencies, is not merely social service as might be done by any agency. Rather it is transformative work; it is ministry, by which the Spirit labors to form Christ in us, to remake us in the image of Christ, who came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many. Our work is the work of the church. It is the work of making disciples. It is work of mutual ministry, in which the servers are served and the served serve, each exercising the manifold gifts of the Spirit. (It has been suggested that this group be dubbed “Transformation Collaboration.”)
3. While we are far from seeing our way to a single fundraising enterprise that we all share, we are beginning to identify ways to help each other. For instance, on October 23 Claiborne Jones and Greg Cole will conduct a workshop on writing an effective appeal letter. The meeting will be hosted at Holy Comforter. Also, we recognize that many volunteers give their time and talent to these ministries. There is little time, however, for them to engage in shared reflection on how their experiences are shaping their spirituality, and there may be no opportunity to share their experiences in their home parishes. One sub-group has begun work on developing a reflection model/curriculum for encouraging and giving structure to such reflection in order to build up the volunteers and the parishes from which they come.
4. We are aware that the most effective fundraising involves telling very specific stories and that the diversity of the Diocesan ministries presents great challenges to complete sharing of the work of fundraising. Nonetheless, we are committed to continued exploration of opportunities for working together and to going where the Spirit leads us. Among the opportunities that we hope to explore are sharing wisdom and expertise for starting, growing, and sustaining ministries, the potential for joint grant applications on shared projects, and sharing development infrastructure (e.g., staff, single supplier contracts, a common mechanism for planning giving, etc.).

The Very Rev. Michael A. Tanner, Convener
(404) 627-6510
vicar@holycomforter-atlanta.org