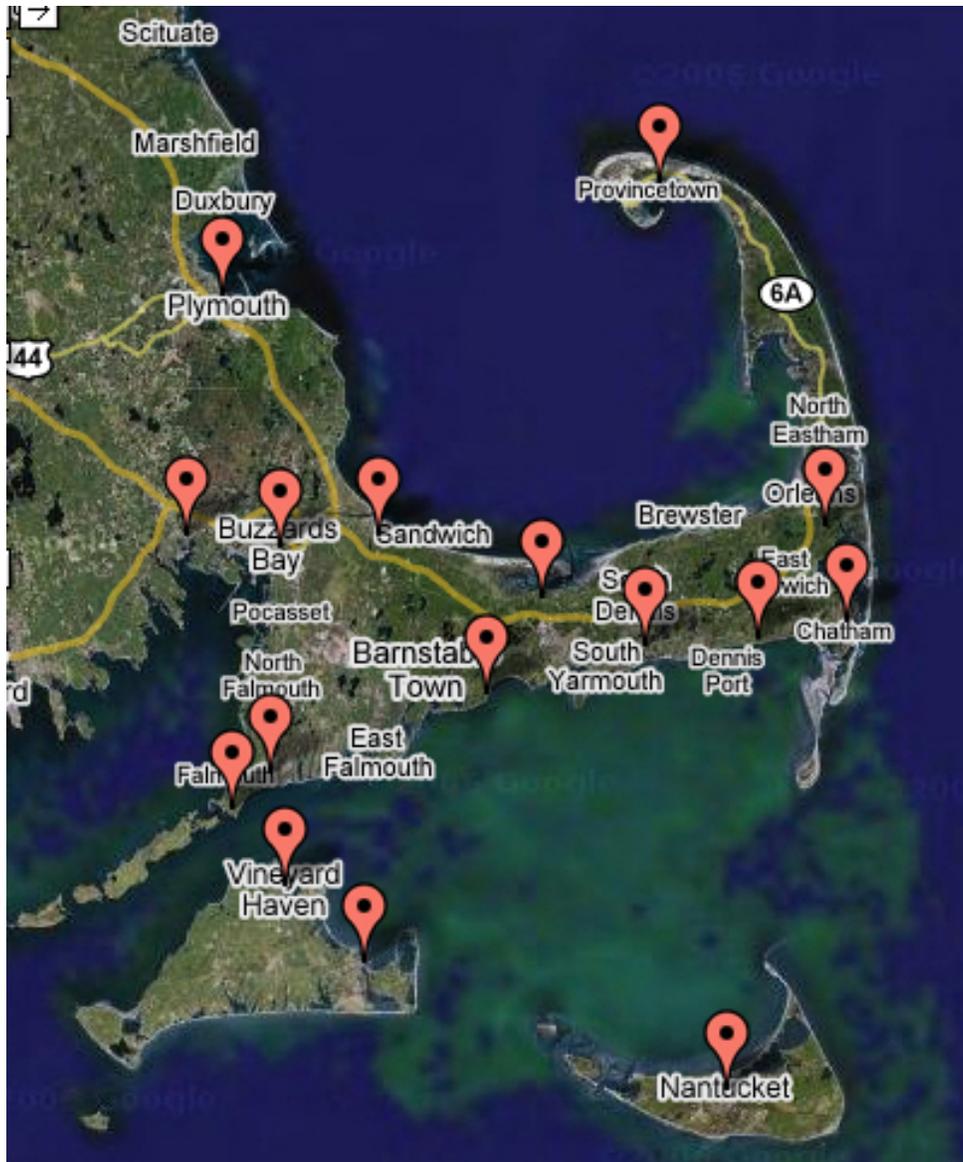


Hands Across the Water: Collaboration & Community Building



Congregational Development Grant Request

Submitted by the Cape & Islands Deanery

April 2007

Hands Across the Water: Collaboration & Community Building

Submitted by Cape & Islands Deanery		Comprising 16 year-round parishes & 3 seasonal congregations
Designated Deanery Parish for Administrative & Financial Oversight of Grant Funds		St. Christopher's Episcopal Church 625 Main Street, Chatham MA 02633 Tel: Day: 508-945-2832.
Key Grant Contacts		
Helen Gordon		Constance Melahoures
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Clerical Contact	The Rev. Brian McGurk	Rector, St. Christopher's – Chatham Dean for the Cape & Islands Deanery 625 Main Street, Chatham MA 02633
Date: _____	_____	
Treasurer: Paul Greenough		
Deanery Co-Conveners		
The Rev. David Fredrickson		Rector – Church of the Good Shepherd
Date: _____		
Ms. Charlotte Stiefel	Date: _____	
Amount Requested:	Program Status: NEW – Provides start-up funding for Deanery & all member parishes	

Project Summary: The geographic realities of our Deanery create challenges for collaborative efforts among our 16 year-round and three seasonal congregations. Seasonal tourism creates needs and opportunities unique to the Cape & Islands both as a Deanery and in our individual parishes. Physical collaboration among our parishes is impeded by the realities of being separated by water and distance with meeting schedules being dictated by weather, ferries, bridge repairs and heavy summer traffic.

We feel it is a logical - and necessary - next step to use the Internet as a powerful and cost-efficient tool to improve our Deanery's communications, to share programs and information, to enhance outreach and to strengthen our ability to help each other with shared goals and concerns through improved networking.

To do this, we propose building an online Deanery community, using web training to help all parishes create and maintain Internet sites for their parishioners, and web video conferencing to allow all parishes to participate in Deanery meetings, special events and worship (such as confirmations), and other types of networking and information-sharing.

Although the requested amount for initial funding appears high, we ask that the reviewers take into account the inclusive nature of our program. We wish to provide tools & resources for each parish in our Deanery and for the Deanery as a whole. When our request is expressed in per parish terms, we are asking for about \$980 in support for each of our 16 parishes. Subsequent year expenses will be significantly lower. Annual amounts needed to maintain the program in subsequent years will be covered in the Deanery's annual budget.

Hands Across the Water: Collaboration & Community Building

Bringing together all the parishes within the Cape & Islands Deanery could be one of the most geographically challenging goals within our Diocese. At the top of the Cape's "upper arm" are parishes in Plymouth, Buzzard's Bay and Wareham, located across the two bridges that serve as our only connection to the mainland. To travel from those parishes to the parish located at the tip of the Cape's finger in Provincetown is almost 80 miles by highway. Our Island members from Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard must traverse the sea to join us, relying on ferries (dependent on weather and season) and finding rides on the mainland. The seasonal population fluctuations of our communities are extreme. The pace of life shifts from frenetic (summer) to isolated (winter).

During the winter, our Deanery assemblies meet quarterly. Our last two assemblies focused on long-range planning and goal-setting. We desire the ability to work together on Deanery projects between our quarterly gatherings, and we are unanimous in our determination to seek better ways to share and collaborate among ourselves and with the Larger World Beyond our Deanery. To do that, we must overcome the physical impediments of distance and the vagaries of weather, ferries, bridge and road repairs, and heavy summer traffic.

Providing Tools, Training, and Support to our Parishes in an Inclusive Manner.

The Internet, or web, has become mainstream in our culture. Not all parishes in our Deanery have a presence on the web; they are currently without a valuable tool to invite people to join them in worship and ministry. Among our parishes, we have folks with skills in media relations, website development and maintenance. We have those who are skilled at training others to use computers, software, and the Internet. We believe that providing all parishes with a common suite of software while also offering training and support in its usage will empower every parish to better share—via websites and electronic and print communications—the message of God's reconciling love found in our ministries and worship as Christians and Episcopalians.

Providing an Online Presence for the Deanery

Deaneries are amorphous – one doesn't point to a building and say, "That's the Deanery." Through creation of an online 'home' for our Deanery, we will provide a central point for information and events. We seek to build community among the parishes in our Deanery. We envision an online presence that is more cohesive and welcoming to visitors—year-round and seasonal residents and tourists. We want provide corporate and individual worship opportunities and resources for deepening our understanding of our faith and being in Communion with those we know and those we do not yet know. We will provide (related Diocesan Mission Goals in parentheses):

- A cyberspace 'home' for our Deanery. (Serving & Inviting)
- An online library of formation materials and class syllabi (Forming & Inviting)
- An online calendar providing a central site with information on worship, formation, outreach and events for our parishes and the Deanery. (Inviting)
- Video links between our parishes to help us make connections with each other. (Inviting)
- Improved ways for our working groups to meet (virtually) between assemblies. (Inviting, Forming, Serving)
- A Deanery youth online area to allow our youth to connect virtually and safely despite geographic distances. (Forming, Inviting, Serving)
- Video links for our Deanery folk to meet and collaborate with those from other areas around the Diocese and the world. (A way to bring diversity to our shores...) (Sending)
- Webcasting of Deanery events and worship (Forming, Serving)
- Webcasting special speakers and perhaps even Diocesan events. (Forming, Serving)
- Cyberspace formation classes and prayer groups (Forming, Sending, Serving)
- Distance learning opportunities and an online repository of resources for enriching communications in the Internet age. (Inviting, Sending)

Our steering committee is comprised of our Deanery Web Sextons group. Our members have experience in communications, public relations, software and computer training, web site development, deployment and maintenance. We are active in our parishes and Deanery in addition to our ministry as stewards of our individual parishes' cyber presence. Our pilot projects are the experiments and experiences we have had with our individual parish web sites and with our current Deanery web pages and blog. We have learned that one

cannot rely on clergy to update web sites, and that sites must be protected from spammers while ensuring they are welcoming and useful to general visitors. We have seen positive usage results when worship resources are added to our websites. We witnessed the interest generated in our blog by letters from General Convention posted each evening from 'our' Deputy from the Cape. Participating in the webcast of the Investiture of the Presiding Bishop allowed us to provide a worship and outreach opportunity locally in our Deanery parishes that connected us with Episcopalians throughout the world.

Goals & Evaluation

Goal: Provide web access to Deanery Assemblies for all parishes unable to attend in person.

We have set short-term goals of getting at least one site on the mainland plus one on each Island up and running for video conferencing as soon as grant funds are received. We have begun testing web conferencing between individuals, and we want to work through the technical setups before the first large groups gather in September and October.

Goal: Design and Deploy Deanery website structure

We are researching ISPs now. The basic Deanery web site hosted by St. Barnabas will be used until we receive funds and move the site to its own domain. As soon as grant funds are received, we will open an account with an online data storage provider to aid in collaborative efforts and offsite centralized storage.

Goal: Design and Provide Training on Communications topics

Utilizing face-to-face and distance learning via web conferencing, we will provide training in basics of website planning and maintenance as well as print media and communications strategies.

Evaluation: Maintain statistical information on the usage of web resources. Assess, monitor, and adjust resource needs (ongoing). Seek feedback at quarterly Deanery Assemblies. Work with the Deanery Executive Committee to aid with planning for Deanery projects, events and evaluate tools and training needs to support these projects.

Purpose of Grant Request for Seed Funding

This vision requires a substantial initial monetary infusion for necessary materials, software and setup as well as the serious voluntary commitment offered by our cadre of web specialists, who are willing to work, train and maintain the new systems as all parishes attain their own comfort levels. Once the seed funding is secured and the cyber community set up, the costs for subsequent years will be much lower. We expect the Deanery's budget from the Diocese will be able to cover the expenditures necessary to maintain our online home. Other costs possibly incurred will be low enough to avoid causing an undue burden on our 16 year-round parishes. The in-kind services for web support will be enhanced in subsequent years as we learn from each other and as more people are drawn to join us in this ministry. Internet and multimedia projects for a faith community are a form of evangelism. The process of collaborating and drawing in others (especially younger folk) to work on a web site, video or webcast is a quiet but equally important evangelistic ministry.

Effects of Partial Funding

We desire to be inclusive, thus our request is to provide equal footing for each year-round parish in our Deanery. We expect the Deanery will host the web sites for our seasonal congregations as well as parishes currently without their own web sites. If we do not have the funds for the full web video conferencing option requested, the higher cost of other options and packages will require us to greatly reduce the number of concurrent conferencing 'seats' available. This will hamper our short-range goals and collaborative efforts, but it will not completely annihilate them. The software component is also key, as we are trying both to avoid redundancy of effort by individual parishes and to provide better support for each other throughout the Deanery. Although it may appear to be overly ambitious to request the full Adobe Creative Suite, the nonprofit price for the bundled suite is more deeply discounted than the nonprofit price of each individual application it contains. Thus, the suite provides us with five powerful software applications instrumental for creating industry-standard high quality print and electronic communications at a price less than that of the individual Adobe applications most critical to achieving our short-term goals. If we receive less funding than requested, we will re-canvass the parishes to see which may have recently acquired some of these Adobe products, and then make our decision as to how to ensure inclusivity and a common software framework.