

CENTRAL FLORIDA PRESBYTERY
“CFP Reformation Grants”
To Support Congregational Initiatives for Vitality and Transformation

The funding for CFP Reformation Grants comes from the capital legacy of congregations in our presbytery which have completed their ministry cycle and have either closed or merged with another congregation. They have asked that we leverage the proceeds from the sale of property to support new sustainable initiatives that seek to build on the historic traditions of our faith, while embracing new ideas and opportunities for Christian witness. *“Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum verbum Dei, that is, “The church reformed, always to be reformed according to the Word of God” in the power of the Spirit.”*

We believe that our local congregations are best able to discern authentic and relevant ministry within their unique context. Therefore, we consider local church accountability and engagement as primary indicators of the priority, integrity, and sustainability of a particular grant request. Funds are intended to be bridge grants for new creative initiatives that offer innovative approaches to local church-based ministries. Our desire is to support dynamic projects that show the love of Jesus in word and action. Funds are not meant to support routine ongoing church expenses, such as current salaries, administrative, operational or debt-relief.

We understand that there are several distinct reasons why congregations will seek to engage in a process of revitalization. These reasons include:

- (1) healthy congregations desiring for adjustments or redirection,
- (2) struggling congregations yearning to become revitalized for life and ministry,
- (3) congregations in the midst of neighborhood demographic changes needing to discern how to best minister to the changing needs of the community.
- (4) And congregations that the presbytery suggests might benefit from participation.

No matter the reason, those who enter into a conversation about revitalization must realize they need to do so with both great humility and care as transformation is exciting but also involves loss. It may include times of discomfort as the congregation deals with change.

Overall Grant Process

Congregational Assessment: Applicants are required to conduct either a self-assessment or third-party assessment such as: as the U. S. Congregational Vitality Survey (USCVS) or Holy Cow Consulting’s Church Assessment Tool (CAT) or CFP Evangelism Coaching or others internal or external? (Some financial assistance from the presbytery or Lilly ReKindle Grant through Columbia Theological Seminary may be available to assist with the costs of an assessment depending on church financial need.)

In order for revitalization to occur, a thorough examination of the congregation and its current focus of ministry must take place. Such an undertaking will be a disciplined examination of the congregation. The purpose for this assessment is to help provide an understanding of what is valued by the membership of the congregation, offer priorities for focusing direction in ministry, give clarity to congregational leadership in their work and ministry, and help engage the congregation and leadership in developing healthy directions for ministry and mission.

Neighborhood Needs: Applicants are required to conduct neighborhood assessment. How has the area around the congregation changed? What is the population like? What tools have been or will be utilized to understand your neighborhood’s needs? What specific need are you wanting to address with this grant?

The congregation may conduct neighbor interviews and discuss results of a MissionInsite or other assessment in their self-identified neighborhood (context mapping tools available).

Discernment: The church will engage in a time of discernment around the results of the above sections. This will include individual and communal prayer seeking leading from the Holy Spirit. Both the VCI and LEAP Program offer an opportunity for group brainstorming of ideas and narrowing of potential areas of ministry interest and passion.

Remember, the overall goal is to discern as nearly as possible the future God has in store for the congregation as it serves the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ. It is ultimately Christ's church. Through prayerful discernment, God's desires will be revealed as the congregation faithfully follows as the Lord leads.

Congregational Gifts: Applicants will need to discern and articulate what congregational gifts they have or will need to acquire in order to meet the stated need.

The denomination's Vital Congregations Initiative (VCI) or the presbytery's LEAP (Listening, Exploring, Acting, Participating) Program or CFP Evangelism Coaching can assist the congregation in interpreting the USCVS results, identifying its gifts, and discovering the needs of neighbors through a discussion of the neighborhood interviews and the MissionInsite report results.

It is important to understand that this process of exploration may reveal some areas which the congregation may not like to acknowledge about the church, and in truth may be painful. In spite of the potential challenging nature of what is discovered, it will be important to faithfully confront those revelations in a constructive fashion, which will allow both the leadership and congregation to react and to address them.

Planning: Based on the activities of the previous three phases, the congregation will formulate an action plan with specific initiatives to undertake toward transformation and vitality. The initiatives should match the congregation's gifts and passion with the needs of the community. The initiatives should include at least one active initiative that will provide hands-on outreach to the community. An initiative may address a need for more specialized pastoral leadership, as well.

Application:

The congregation must express energy and support for the action to be considered for funding, including approval by the session. It will be important for the church to identify the human and financial resources it will invest in its initiatives, whether it is time, talent, or treasure. A detailed budget of anticipated costs is also required for an application to be considered. It will also be important for you to consider how you will know that your initiatives are working and how will you adapt if they are not.

Implementation & Evaluations: After the Reformation Grant Committee reviews a church's application, a decision will be made about the financial award. A check will be provided to the church and there will be an annual program assessment and accounting of the funds used. At the time of accounting of funds, churches will have the opportunity to return funds unused or may be considered for additional funding.

Following the implementation of the initiatives, an evaluation will be completed. A follow-up evaluation will also be done one year after completion to identify ways in which the church has obtained sustainable transformation and vitality.

2023 CFP REFORMATION GRANTS
To Support Congregational Initiatives for Ministry Enhancements
APPLICATION FORM

Congregation Name: _____ PIN: _____

Address:

Session Clerk: _____

Session Moderator: _____

Contact Person for Grant:

Address: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Home/Work Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Provide a narrative answer to the following questions:

Section (1) Summary:

In simple language explain the overall initiative and how it will serve as bridge to the future ministry of your congregation. How will this program translate to congregational transformation?

Section (2) Congregational Assessment:

- a. What assessment process was used?

- b. What your church learned about itself, its calling, and its context?

Section (3) Neighborhood Needs

- a. What assessment process did you use? (i.e., MissionInsite)

- b. How has the area around the congregation changed?

- c. What is the makeup/demographics of the local population?

- d. Where do you see the Spirit of God already at work in your community/?

- e. What tools have been or will be utilized to understand your neighborhood's needs?

- f. What specific needs are you seeking address?

(4) Discernment:

- a. What spiritual-discernment practices has your congregation and session engaged in?
- b. What has been revealed to you?
- c. How will you continue to engage in spiritual discernment throughout the process?

Section (5) Initiatives:

- a. List the initiatives you intend to pursue in address your stated community needs.
(Indicate how each initiative will assist in the process of revitalizing your congregation)

Section (6) Congregational Gifts:

- a. What gifts does your congregation currently have to address this/these initiatives?
- b. What gifts will you need to acquire to meet this/these stated initiatives?
- c. What is your church already doing in the area of transformation and congregational vitality?

Section (7) Planning

- a. How would you use the additional funds from this grant?

Please include as much information as possible, including goals, timelines, human and other resources, and budgets.

Section (8) Evaluation

- a. What criteria will use to gage success and sustainability of this initiative?
- b. What will be your review process? (If necessary, submit a modification request)

Section (9) Session Approval

Indicate that your Session or leadership Team approves the project.

Date of Session Meeting to Approve Grant Request: _____

Signature: Clerk of Session _____

Signature: Moderator of Session _____

- Allow about 6 weeks between the time you apply and when you need the funding, if approved.
- Email Cheryl Carson at ccarson@cfpresbytery.org or go online to the Presbytery's website <http://www.cfpresbytery.org/church-transformation.html> for a digital application form. Please fill out the application and return to Cheryl Carson via email at the address above.