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UCC New Ministry Matching Fund Proposal

Vision and Mission: Being Sanctuary

“...sacred circles of love and care”

Sanctuary United Church of Christ is a diverse community of action-oriented followers of Jesus, who humbly strive through worship, faith formation and the practice of Jesus’ teachings to love God and our neighbors as God loves us.

God calls us to care for and meet people where they are; share a life of prayer and joyful service with all; and together--worship, rest in, and serve God. We are seekers of justice and lovers of all of God’s creation. Through the community formed by the Holy Spirit, we are consoled, forgiven, refreshed and inspired.

We extravagantly welcome all people; believers, non-believers, doubters, questioners, no matter who they love, their gender identity or expression, their race, culture, ability, or economic circumstance. All are a blessing to our journey of faith and we seek to share God’s love and grace with all.

Sanctuary UCC is the new church “Re-Plant/Ministry” of the Congregational Church of West Medford, UCC, a 142 year old institution that has sold it’s aging property and invested its financial resources in a new model for ministry. About twenty-five of the members of the congregation have come along as we moved our operations and our ministry into a store front just down the street from the old church. We have been resurrected as Sanctuary United Church of Christ and we have re-branded, re-imagined and re-framed everything that we are. We are focusing on “being” rather than “doing” or “having” – and our vision is to ‘create circles of love and care’ across the city.

Our attention has truly turned outward through a ministry plan that is grounded in a commitment to love our neighbor and informed by our mission field, our values and our commitment to be a progressive Christian community to those who are not already in a faith community.

We’re engaged in day-to-day spiritual care of strangers and new friends as a result of our commitment to extravagant hospitality and the availability of a pastors during our Open Sanctuary hours. We are discovering our souls and the sacredness of creativity through pop culture and an Arts and Inspiration ministry of film, music, art and the spoken word and we’re developing new relationships and partnerships in the city through community organizing. Through it all, we are seeking to remain faithful to the God who has brought us this far, and we are striving to stay open to where God may be leading us next!

Our 2015 Ministry Plan is linked here: [2015.02.01 Ministry Plan](#)

Demographics

Medford is a diverse, urban city with approximately 60,000 people. The median age is 38 years, median household income (in 2012) is approx. \$ 73,500. 75% of the community is white, 8.5% black, 8.3% Asian, 5% Hispanic, 3% mixed race and less than 1% other; with 21% of the city being foreign born.

44% of adults over 25 years of age have education beyond High School. The unemployment rate in 2012 was 5.6%.

Of the 73% of the city who identify as religiously affiliated - 74% are Roman Catholic, 11% Jewish, 7% Mainline Protestant, 11% other. In the last four presidential elections over 60% of those who voted for the Democrat Candidate.

The city has excellent access to public transportation via bus to both the red and orange line and a commuter rail station in West Medford.

Our MissionInsite data indicates a significant presence of the G24 - Young City Solos, H26 - Progressive Potpourri, K38 - Gotham Blend, and K39 - Metro Fusion. Each of these groups is underserved by existing models of ministry in our community. Our mission is built around a call to serve these communities with a new model of ministry.

Leadership Team

Staff and Leadership

The Lead Pastor—Wendy Miller Olapade: Wendy is a current candidate for the Center for Progressive Renewal's New Church Plant Certification and is engaged in continued coaching relationship with Sara Wilcox for the program year 2015/2016. Wendy holds her standing in the Metro Boston Association of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ. Further details about standing, experience, training, preparation for this ministry and a biographical statement are linked here.

[Wendy Miller Olapade Biographical Statement](#)

[Wendy Miller Olapade Resume](#)

The Community Minister—to be determined: The congregation is currently in a search process seeking a second pastor, which we are calling a Community Minister who will collaborate with the rest of the leadership team to connect the church's ministry and mission with the community. We are very excited about the value this staff member will bring to the day to day mission, but specifically will engage in community organizing tools to build the faith community and leadership therein. We imagine that over two to three years, this position will either successfully recruit and equip enough lay leaders so as to work themselves out of a job, or help build the community to the point where it can sustain more than one pastor. A description of this role is linked here: [Community Minister Job Description and Advertisement](#)

[Advertisement](#)

The Church Manager/Administrator—S. Grady Deaton: We have recently chosen a church administrator who is inspired by and feels called to our vision of creating community, spreading love and connecting to the human spirit through the arts. He is not a member of the church, but while he is here in our store front location during open sanctuary hours - he is engaged in extravagant hospitality and empathy; is building relationships with the other business owners and passersby; and adds imagination and ideas to our ministry implementation. He is able to triage the care needs of those we serve and is a minister in his

own right. As well, he brings community organizing experience to the work of administering our content, relationships, social media and technology. He is building best practices and processes in administration, finances and communications as we experiment with new forms of ministry.

The Sexton—Steven Smith: Our sexton is a local, lifelong member of the neighborhood and city in which our ministry is focused. He is one of those people who everybody knows and who knows how to get things done in the midst of the good-old-boy-network of our unique city. Like our Church Administrator, Steve brings his work for the church into the community with his big personality and charisma. He shares our passion for spreading love, caring for others and for the recovery community. Whether he is setting up our tent at the Medford Overcoming Addictions Kickball Tournament, introducing me to one of the restaurant owners down the street or helping us get a permit to hold a block party in the parking lot out back - he is a wonderful asset to our efforts to go out into the city and spread the good news.

Laity and Leadership

Our New Bylaws: Concurrent with creating a new model for ministry, the congregation wrote a new set of bylaws designed to hold governance and fiduciary responsibility with a Leadership Circle (Board), with ministry being lived into by ministry teams who would be empowered by the mission and purpose of the congregation. A copy of the Bylaws is linked here: [CCWM DBA: Sanctuary UCC Bylaws Effective June 1, 2015](#)

The Leadership Circle/Governance and Fiduciary Responsibilities: As you can see from the preceding description of staff leadership, our ministry plan presumes a staff driven and led ministry model for the first two to four years (depending on our success at sharing the gospel, engaging new ministry partners, revenue and fund-raising efforts, and the effect of the stock market on our investments) with a deliberate plan to recruit, empower, and equip leadership; build out systems; and raise revenue to achieve sustainability.

That said our intention over this next year is to deliberately find new people who have not yet been involved in this community who are excited about our vision and are interested in being developed, empowered, and trained to join alongside the former congregation to advance our ministry. We plan to support these new leaders through an intentional program of internal leadership development and engaging external resources, such as the Leadership Development Institute, to provide community organizing training.

Some of the key community leaders we have begun to build partnerships around ministry offerings and are in conversation with about serving in other roles and may seek to add to our leadership team include a Music Teacher/Music School Owner; Chair of Local Arts Council, A Local Artist, Local Insurance Company Owner; Local Bank Manager, Yoga Studio Owner, Restaurant Owner from our square, Local Candidate for City Council, (3) Community Activist/Leaders, Members of High School Gay Straight Alliance.

Our Ministry Teams/Being Sanctuary: Our new bylaws provide for ministry teams to support the ‘work’ of being sanctuary. Ministry teams exist and/or can be created in three ways:

- A new ministry for which a member has a passion becomes a reality and we develop a ministry team to support the effort. For example: Three members currently seek to create a homestay program in our city for middle-school aged members of the Lakota Tribe on the Pine Ridge Reservation with which we have a five year relationship. If the congregation makes this a ministry we will recruit a ministry team in 2016 to administer and support this effort.

- A new ministry is called forth from the vision of the congregation and a ministry team is recruited by the Leadership Circle/Board and or staff. For example, we see our mission to include the sharing of care across the city; and imagine recruiting and training people to share practical and spiritual care with those in need. There would be several layers of ministry in this model and we intend to recruit, train, and supervise both the givers of care and the team to administer the ministry. For more on this ministry, see description [2015.09.25 Sanctuary CTC Ministry Description](#)
- A ministry has come forward from our past and there are members who remain committed to that ministry. For example, we have relationships with City Mission of Boston and the Outdoor Church of Cambridge. We have a standing commitment to make sandwiches for Outdoor Church, actively seek ways to grow from and support these entities with fund raising, sock drives, and onsite worship with those served by the Outdoor Church. We also engage speakers from City Mission's Public Voice Project and send volunteers annually to City Mission's MLK, Jr. Day of Service.

Timeline of Ministry Development and Implementation

April 2014: Congregational Church of West Medford votes to confirm sale of building and vision for new ministry model (aka: restart of church). That ministry model can be seen here via this link: [A Vision for a New Model of Ministry](#)

August 2014 to current: Lead Pastor begins CPR New Church Planter Certification and MACUCC New Ministry Start Cohort, CPR New Church Plant Coaching, NCLI 2014 Atlanta, NCLI 2015 Boston, and more

September/October, 2014: Congregational Church of West Medford moves into new space and begins to feel out the new Sanctuary UCC ministry model with experiments with alternative forms of worship, the arts and inspiration ministry, increased visibility on social networks, 'street level' engagement in community events and two part time associate pastoral hires engaging youth, mission/outreach and faith formation.

November 2014: Begin 12 Step Study Group

January/February, 2015: Sanctuary UCC elects a Bold 2015 Budget (provided in the budget section of this proposal) and a Sanctuary UCC Ministry Plan that has fleshed out a staffing model and ministry plan designed to support the values, mission and purpose defined in the vision defined above. The 2015 Ministry Plan (previously referenced on page 1) is linked here: [2015.02.01 Ministry Plan](#)

February 2015: New Hire Church Administrator (note description in Leadership Section)

Winter/Spring 2015: (OMGoodness, what a hard winter.) Sanctuary staff settle into outward facing new model of ministry in earnest by building out community partnerships, scheduling regular and recurring Arts and Inspiration events, developing greater community connection through pastoral engagement in local community boards and grass roots community groups, testing alternative forms of faith formation and worship,

February, 2015: Implement a series of conversations on organizational structure/bylaws, roles for, shared experience of new forms of ministry

March, 2015: Begin Dinner Church, last Sunday of the Month in partnership with North Prospect Union

April, 2015: Sanctuary UCC elects a new set of bylaws to become effective June 1; designed to simplify institutional effort and serve as springboard for empowering, equipping and inspiring ministry and mission. New bylaws (previously reference in the leadership section) is linked here: [CCWM DBA: Sanctuary UCC Bylaws Effective June 1, 2015](#)

June, 2015: Sanctuary UCC elects first new Leadership Circle as per reframed bylaws

Summer 2015: Sanctuary UCC keeps the energy high and active in the city through the summer settling into partnerships and new ministry gatherings:

- Open Sanctuary Hours fully staffed with “Pastor Is In” availability
- Sunday Morning Worship transforms to a completely collaborative, circle model of worship
- Arts and Inspiration Ministry functioning with at least three Fridays evening’s per month of Faith and Film, Music for the Soul, The Art Gallery at Sanctuary; [brief description and vision for this ministry](#)
- Alternative Wednesday Worship Service – meditation, prayer, communion
- Experiment with ARTChurch – using the gallery art installations as a lens for experiential worship
- Attend Multiple Community Events with tent, prayer, presence and invitations
- CoSponsor ‘Medford Overcoming Addictions’ Kickball Tournament
- Silent Auction Fund Raiser and 2015 Senior Volunteer Trip to Pine Ridge Reservation
- Blessing of School Year on the Street

Fall/Winter 2015: Sanctuary actively begins to build out new participation and new forms of engagement and income

- ASAP Hire Community Minister
- October/November: Stewardship Campaign with current membership and new forms of income
- Sustain current level of ministry engagement as described above

January/February 2016: Assessment and Adjusting

- Leadership Circle leads congregational in assessment of ministry plan, worship experience, music ministry, staffing model, measurements toward goals and finances for first year of experiment; adjust ministry plan as called for
- Elect leadership team, ministry plan and budget for year two of new ministry

Winter/Spring 2015: Implementing Year Two of the New Ministry

- Recruit, train and build Circles of Care Ministry. For description of this ministry see link here: [2015.09.25 Sanctuary CTC Ministry Description](#)
- Develop, Implement, Assess (Beta Test), Market and Produce web based faith formation product www.formingfaith.net seeking sustainability ad potential income
- Invite participation of new people through one-on-one engagement
- Build new leadership using community organizing tools
- Sanctuary joins as organizing member of the “Medford Conversations Project”
- Continued development of partnerships, new forms of income

Ministry-related goals for 1, 2, and 5 years from the date of the proposal with attention to a fundraising, recruiting, and outreach strategy: The nature of our ministry model engenders new ways of thinking about “success”. We do not have a sanctuary, we are being sanctuary – through shared experience of the sacred, deep knowing of each other, creative forms of faith formation and loving our neighbor through care and commitment. For the near term, we are committed to having these experiences in small circles, through intimate connection, and collective care of the (small and wider) community, and service to the “least of these.”

Benchmarks: Our ministry plan calls for many self-sustaining, small circles connected by the vision of being sanctuary in the city and in the world and serving our neighbor with love and care. The circles might be worship circles, faith and film groups, artists in community, circles called to care for others, recovery study groups and more. The benchmarks we developed for the 2015 ministry plan include: # of Circles of engagement; # Participating in each Circle; # of contacts per week by Staff Members; # of contacts per week by Members; # of Leaders Developed; # served through mission; and Goals for new income.

As you will see in the budget documentation, our ministry plan presumes significant capital investment from the proceeds of the sale of our building for a period of two to four years; depending on our spending, new income and the market in which these resources are invested. The current expectation is that we would experiment with becoming sustainable only to the point of spending down the investments to no less than \$ 2M. The benchmarks and income development goals for years 1, 2 and 5 are VERY bold, but reflect income development plan to achieve sustainability at five years. Linked here:

[2015.09.25 Goals.Benchmarks Worksheet](#)

Strategies for adjusting when benchmarks are missed: We are clear that everything we do is an experiment. Following the Spirit’s call, we are seeking to discern how we are being led to minister within this new model. For us it is important to stay close to this experimental nature. We will celebrate our successes and put energy and resources behind what has worked, taking that as nudge from the Spirit. In the same way, we need to be prepared to let go of what is not working. To learn from what fails, and to see the ways that God is correcting us toward our calling. Our bylaws call for/require an annual assessment of our vision and the goals and objectives which we set forth in the preceding year. The bylaws also expect from within the covenantal relationship of participants and leaders the investment of time, talent and treasure in the ministry and mission of the church. We will lean into these expectations as a way of shifting from a membership to discipleship culture for those who have followed us into the new ministry and as the standard for setting expectations with those who will be new to it. As our Lead Pastor, Rev. Wendy is responsible for holding the staff accountable to the goals that we set together. The Leadership Circle will hold Rev. Wendy accountable to her commitment to faithfully lead us and empower our church to live out the mission to which we have committed.

Strategy for additional fund raising:

See listing in the previously referenced [2015.09.25 Goals.Benchmarks Worksheet](#)

Stewardship Campaign- Beginning in the Fall of 2015 we will conduct an annual Stewardship Campaign. We expect that members of our church will give generously to support our outward-facing ministry.

Additionally, we will be approaching all those who have encountered our ministry, whether through our Arts and Inspiration Series, or working with us in community based partnerships, or by dropping into Open Sanctuary. We will encourage everyone to do their part to support the whole mission of Sanctuary, no matter which specific place they find as a home.

Virtue Capitalists and Angel Investors - What we are doing at Sanctuary serves as a laboratory for the wider church. We are testing a frontier that other congregations may be facing soon, and we are living out a new model for ministry with the intention of sharing what we learn so that others can replicate our successes and avoid our failures. With this in mind, we are seeking contributions from individuals who are not directly engaged in our ministry, but who see the benefit and are interested in supporting our work.

Income from www.FormingFaith.net - During our visioning process, we designed and developed a powerful model for a web-based, “flipped” Sunday School ministry which would resource families to form faith at home--using pop culture references to experience spiritual practices and bring them together with other families for shared practice and service. We expect to find resources to further develop, market, maintain and test this ministry – and hope in 2016/2017 to move it through sustainability to profitability.

Income from Arts and Inspiration: We hope to develop the Arts and Inspiration Ministry to become self-sustaining while mining the participants for gifts and support that will grow to become revenue source. As well, we will seek grant income for arts programs as possible sources of income.

Budget Reductions through Leadership Development: As noted elsewhere, our current ministry plan is staff driven and includes multiple staff positions whose purpose will be to equip, empower and develop leaders (and themselves out of a job)! Over the next five years, professional staff will evangelize, recruit volunteers, develop leaders and support ministry teams so as to move from a staff led to a lay led church.

Budgets

[2014 Budget with 2012, 2013 Actuals](#)

[2015 Detailed Budget Approved; 2015 High Level Budget Approved Including Income and Gifts; 2015 Narrative Budget Proposal](#)

2016 High Level Budget Proposal: This is a Draft Budget developed for the purpose of this proposal and based in our experience to date. We expect the expenses to be consistent with or less than those we proposed for the first year of our experiment. The Leadership Circle and staff will be working through the actual expenses of this first year and spend significant time assessing the use of the resources and the value of the expenses in regards to our success. We do expect to have a more thorough 2016 Detailed Budget including a 2016 Narrative Budget and will share that with the UCC Grantors upon completion. As we hope you have noted, we are living into the unknown, but doing so with an eye toward sustainability and vital, healthy systems and good stewardship of the gifts with which God has entrusted us. We expect that a fine toothed comb review of this high level draft will engender savings, adjustments and potentially new expenses to support the vision.

Relationship with Conference/Association

Our staff have maintained and continue to maintain close connection with the MACUCC through ongoing relationships with Metropolitan Boston Association leadership (Rev. Wendy Vander Hart) and MACUCC New Minister Development and Church Development leadership (Rev. Don Remick) throughout the last 3 years of New Beginnings Assessment, discernment, decision making and development of this new ministry. The Lead pastor has been engaged in CPR coaching and new ministry cohort groups. Our staff consistently participate in MACUCC and MBA conferences, leadership opportunities and covenant with colleagues.

[Letter of Endorsement to be offered by Don Remick](#)

Contact information for Church and Pastor

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