



March 24, 2019

Just what is the New Ministries Fund?

Every now and then you will see a message in this Communitas reminding you that the **New Ministries Fund** applications are due. You are linked to our PSEC website to receive more information on this fund.

Allow me to take just a few more minutes to explain to you how churches across our conference have added new and exciting outreach programs through the benefit of this fund. Programs such as Pizza Church, The Saturday Enrichment Program, Clothes bins, Soup and Such and Memory Café (a safe place for individuals with Alzheimer's and Dementia) just to name a few. And then there are the training programs such as The Leadership Project (now part of the PSEC website), the Soul Wounds of War training for clergy and church leaders, or the Spiritual Direction available to our clergy.

The **New Ministries Fund** made these programs possible. Would they have occurred otherwise? Perhaps. Perhaps not. The objective of our 2020 Vision Plan is to create in our Conference an ethos of expectation, experimentation and transformation AND to develop opportunities for adaptive, creative and entrepreneurial discipleship. To accomplish this, The **New Ministries Fund** program (established from the change of Conference Centers and the closure of our outdoor ministry center) awards up \$15,000 in support of new ministry initiatives — particularly those which connect congregations and local communities

So, is there something new your church has been contemplating? Is there some new program, outreach you've been considering but there just hasn't been those extra funds? Then perhaps you should look at the **New Ministries Fund** Application and see if your new idea fits the criteria for this fund.

The next deadline is June 1st. To connect to the application, use the following link.

<http://psec.org/resources/new-ministries-fund-application/>

Leadership and Lent

I was blessed with an opportunity to join PSEC colleagues, Lutherans and Presbyterians hear Tod Bolsinger speak from his book [Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory](#); a book I recommend highly to everyone engaged in church leadership. Most of his writing builds on the premise of Ronald Heifetz and Martin Linsky that "*Leadership is disappointing your own people at a rate they can absorb.*" As I type that quote, I can hear both Moses (looking over the Hebrews) and Jesus (looking over the disciples) say "Amen." Tod also confirms what I've heard other pastors and leaders claim and that is that people do not fear change, they fear the loss that inevitably happens with change — especially when the gain of change is hard to see. Catholic theologian, Richard Rohrer, spoke to this very thing in a recent online reflection:

"Perhaps the reason it is so hard for us to see the evolution of the Cosmic Christ in our individual lives and in the arc of history is that this groaning and this giving birth (see Romans 8:22) proceeds by a process of losses and gains, and the losses are very real. There is no doubt that history goes three steps forward and two steps backward, but thank God there seems to be a net gain. We may be more aware of war, racism, classism, genocide, and ignorance around the world today, yet violence is actually declining.

When a new level of maturity is found, there is an immediate and strong instinct to pull backward to the old and familiar. This is even included in the Biblical text, which is crucially important to understand. Thankfully, there is always a leaven, a critical mass, a few people who carry the momentum toward healing and wholeness. This is the Second Coming of Christ: Christ embodied by people who can no longer live fearfully, hatefully, or violently. There are always some who have been transformed by Love, by the Christ Mystery. This is the corporate shape of "salvation."

Jesus takes us on a Lenten journey of loss and gain — of fig trees, silver coins, sheep, sons and best friends. Every parable of loss turns into a story of amazing gain until the ultimate story of death and resurrection; a story that will lead Thomas to an "immediate and strong instinct to pull backward to the old and familiar." I am trying, this Lent, to suspend my disappointment at God's leading (and our following) and instead live in wonder and possibility. I pray for courage to stand in the loss and wait for the gain. And I am grateful to be a part of people and places that make up PSEC — "*a critical mass, a few people who carry the momentum toward healing and wholeness.*"

May it be so with God's blessing,
Bill (William P. Worley, PSE Conference Minister)