

1. Changing Context of Congregational Life and Ministry

"Humans frequently disappoint." David Bentley Hart

Given the overwhelming drastic, dramatic and immediate challenge of social distancing amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the context of adapting liturgy and mission to social media and other internet platforms of communication and organization has completely dominated the energy and focus of every congregation. It underscores the critical need to be engaged in community. The permutations of liturgical practice ramped up due to the crisis have produced practices and liturgical choices built out of an understandable desperation, but wholly outside the bounds of a healthy theological perspective. Choices made under duress will not withstand the scrutiny of time. However, and more importantly, we must not lose the opportunity of change presented even amidst the unimaginable horror of what could result in hundreds of thousands of deaths. *We must not be interested in merely bouncing back but bouncing forward by asking the questions not only of what is being lost from the past, but what, from today's response, would be lost if we simply return to the way it was.* The way it was is no longer (if it ever was) tenable.

The list of challenges to congregational life are manifold. The host of identified culprits often includes the focus on survival rather than mission; the velocity of societal change; the generational failure of faith transmission; the lack of adaptive change; political polarization; uniformly negative portrayals of religion in media; stolid organizational structures; lack of a hopeful and welcoming hospitality patterned after the Christ of the Gospels; generationally segmented programming; and dull, inconsistent catechetical formation that fails to assist members to give a confident and fresh explanation for the faith that is in them. The alienation of millennials is not unexpected in this tortured environment. The addition of a relentless pandemic has exposed the weakness of a clericalism that rushes in to make up for any voids and inadequacies. The hyper-functioning pastor, acrobatically spinning so many plates on so many slim reeds to keep things from crashing down, is not just unsustainable, but robs a thriving community of its fullness.

These challenges are not exclusive to houses of worship, of course. As theologian David Bentley Hart trenchantly observed, humans frequently disappoint. Such disappointments dominate and skew the perception of Church, such that we have an uphill climb in presenting the claims, worth and meaning of belonging to a community of faith. One of the larger challenges to congregational life, its liturgy and mission – which this grant is poised fully to address – is a system-wide but self-imposed one: Insularity. Each community, however embedded in denominational structures, plays in its own sandbox within its own silo. All the challenges are exacerbated and remain disconnected due, in part, to the lost opportunity of sharing our most valuable resource: ourselves in a community bigger than ourselves. The attenuation of creativity and lack of accountability beyond the usual mandatory fiduciary annual reports are reinforced by our isolation. Merely cultivating an increased loyalty to denominational identity as some sort of alumni association is not the proper answer to harness the power, resources, and corrective behaviors that can occur in grouping and commitments beyond the current stasis. As a variant of tribalism, each congregation with its pastors undermines the universal catholicity which is at the heart of our fuller baptismal identity. The authority accumulated to and by the ordained leader

comes to over-define denominational faith itself, diminishing the full experience of the depth, breadth, height and length of the presence of the divine in the Body gathered. Once we compromise the catholicity of the universal church, we become enthralled by our own successes and overcome by our own fears. This proposal seeks a recovery and re-establishment of the universal church by taking a small but significant step toward enlarging the sandbox, and bringing to bear the significant resources of the whole people to meet the significant challenges of this moment.

2. What social and cultural changes do congregations need to address?

“Early Christian resistance to ancient Roman spectacle provides new and provocative insights into modern consumer culture . . . We have to creatively and carefully cultivate practices of dishabituation that attend to the particular manifestations of the spectacle in the modern society.” Chanon Ross

- The development of an additional odyssey phase of human development between adolescence and adulthood is associated with longer transitions to marriage and family;
- The acceptance of the changed nature of human sexual identity;
- The disease of persistent, malignant racism;
- The alienation of younger persons who find proclamations of spiritual truths to be irrelevant to their experience;
- The dominance of “spectacle” in media and entertainment supplanting organic community;
- Political polarization;
- Hyper-individualism;
- Proliferation of choices;
- Reduction of our full human identity to producer/consumer;
- Resistance to change and adaptation;
- Attending to the vastly different needs of the generations.

What other commonalities do congregations share?

Global concerns about environmental upheaval, economic injustice and inequities, extreme world poverty as well as the core, singular interior struggle of deep loneliness amongst our people, be they living alone or not.

3. Characteristics of Thriving Congregations

“This nurture in passion is concrete and specific, as indeed passion must always be . . . It is a nurture that produces adults who know so well who they are and what is commanded that they value and celebrate their oddity in the face of every seductive and powerful alternative.” Walter Brueggemann

Congregations that thrive are passionate, and they know it. They will rely on that sense of self as a reason to keep moving. There is a distinctiveness that members of a thriving congregation have, a willingness to celebrate their oddity – standing apart from the dominant culture, yet seeking to transform it to align with their Gospel values. A thriving congregation is “*permissional*,” open, and seeking ways to include rather than control. Its leadership structure and ethos are horizontal, mobilizing

every member to embody, in their own way, the expression of Christ in their midst. Challenges and conflicts are technical, not personal.

What helps thriving congregations develop a clear sense of their values and mission?

“There are no easy solutions to being church in a post-establishment world. Yet opening up space to innovate and adapt, to call forth the gifts from among all God’s people, creates the possibility of a more vibrant and faithful future.” Dwight J. Zscheile

In 1988, the Vestry of Church of the Holy Spirit (Lebanon, NJ) went on a three-day silent retreat and read through decades of vestry minutes, as well as Scripture and Book of Common Prayer materials. At the conclusion of three days, the parish mission statement came to immediate and universal visibility: *Our mission is to know Christ as we serve others, proclaim his love and grow in his Spirit.* The consistent and regular articulations of this identity during weekly worship and the beginning of every parish meeting changed us and order us still. That mission statement is not simple wording on letterhead, but a succinct discipline of our liturgical life and our missional program activities. It orders the structure of Vestry meetings, formation and youth group –everything. And it has changed. In the early 2000’s, as a result of our theological book club, we became concerned over exclusive language and the lack of a proper Trinitarian expression of faith, so the statement became *Our mission is to know Christ as we serve others, proclaim God’s love and grow in the Spirit.* More recently, we have come to realize that “knowing” Christ is not quite our calling so much as “following,” and even more compelling: *Our mission to become like Christ, as we serve others, proclaim God’s love, and grow in the Spirit.*

A consultant came to teach us things last year, and assumed he had to help us understand our purpose. “Does anyone know why you come to Church of the Holy Spirit?” he asked. Without prompting, the whole assembly of dozens of people stood and loudly recited our mission statement. It left him in stunned silence for minutes as he quickly changed his agenda and PowerPoint. The story illustrates the power of naming identity. That naming of understanding is not static but living. Over the years, it has driven us to open up prison ministry with twenty volunteers, to a companion parish relationship with a diverse Spanish-speaking congregation, to a community that supports local artists (assisted by a sabbatical grant from the Lilly Endowment, 2012), and many more projects, both dramatic and subtle. Our mission is measured by how much care we can provide to those who cannot respond in-kind.

What helps a thriving congregation develop a clear sense of their values and mission is the time and focus for guided reflection, the articulated and succinct naming of their identity and calling in regular ways that shape their community life, and an openness to reframing that sense as circumstances evolve.

How can Christian practices help them establish and maintain their vitality?

Living more and more fully into a baptismal reality of prayer and action, congregations embody a radical vision: the Church in the midst of the world as a sign, instrument, and foretaste of the promised and immanent Reign of God. Indeed, the witness of Scripture is clear that, since the Resurrection, the church is Christ’s Body in the world. Communities of faith are formed and transformed in this identity as they engage in the dynamic interweaving of missional liturgy “in the sanctuary” and missional service

“beyond the walls.” Dedicated and intentional practices of daily prayer in their various expressions - private and corporate - and daily actions of loving service, are the expected behavior of members of thriving congregations. The courage of shaping a life through these disciplines of prayer and action, integrating our interior and exterior lives, is strengthened by attractive presentation and practice publicly and privately by leaders and members alike.

4. Program Purposes and Goals – State the proposed program’s purposes and goals.

“You can’t rely on your eyes when your imagination is out of focus.” - Mark Twain

Pillar and Cloud is a network of congregations moving forward with hope toward God’s promised future. The pillar of fire that guides us is the Paschal light of Christ, our Savior, dead and risen, a holy mystery into which we are incorporated. The cloud that surrounds and accompanies us is the great cloud of witnesses: the Church visible and invisible, beyond boundaries of space and time.

In a time when many congregations are consumed by adapting to social distancing requirements and distracted by increasing demands on their resources and anxiety about their future, Pillar and Cloud connects congregations choosing to focus on the vocation of prayer and action. These congregations are intentional about revitalizing worship and mission. They celebrate God’s gracious action in the world with joy and confidence. They respond to God’s work in the world by proclaiming and embodying the vibrant, exciting, and demanding call of the gospel. Pillar and Cloud aspires to establish and encourage models of congregational life that clearly manifest this robust vision of the church, transforming individual lives and moving from strength to strength by activating the ministry of all the baptized.

This understanding of the church is foundational to the *Book of Common Prayer* of The Episcopal Church (BCP), the *Book of Alternative Services* of the Anglican Church of Canada (BAS), and *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and in Canada. APLM and CHS affirm the great potential in further liturgical and mission renewal. Pillar and Cloud congregations embrace this theology and express it through carefully prepared formation, worship, witness, and pastoral care, leading to growth not only in members, but also in the depth of our mission, working for God’s justice and peace.

How does the proposed program fit within the applicant’s own mission?

APLM and CHS are organizations local and national whose singular purpose is to realize the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven through the means of collaborative missional and liturgical action. The Pillar and Cloud Network is foundational to our mutual understanding.

For this author, Pillar and Cloud is a cumulative opportunity, aggregating 38 years of pastoral ministry, secular professional management roles, non-profit development, diocesan and nationwide liturgical development, and personal academic interest and study through doctoral courses in evangelism and church growth. In prison, we would call this a scrap shawl. Crocheting in Maximum Security for the past 15 years, some of the women would specialize in the tedious task of taking the remnants, the small balls of leftover yarn, and crafting a marvelous garment. This involves much tying together and then tucking the many ends into the whole of the developing fabric. It is obviously more time-consuming, but the

unevenness of the yarns blends to form something warm, comforting, beautiful, and to those who invest in the effort, something of great value and meaning. The Pillar and Cloud Network and this grant, describing and petitioning on its behalf, are embodiments of this finely crafted effort – the scrap shawls called life.

How will the program enable congregations to thrive?

What would have been the reactions of Bach, Mozart and Beethoven to Dave Brubeck's 1959 "Take Five," which revolutionized time signatures in the world of Jazz. Would they have been mystified, aghast, or just said, "Wow, what I could have done with that freedom!?" Edwin Friedman

By resourcing beyond themselves in healthy, ongoing relationships with two other congregations, a single congregation and its leadership can elevate their vision of calling, learn and model effective and efficient means of communication, engender enthusiasm and confidence for new projects of mission or liturgical expression built on other's experience, and find fulfillment and elevated self-appreciation and morale through sharing from their own wisdom. Of course, it always helps to live into the explicit promise of Jesus, "When two or three [*congregations*] are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Why has the applicant decided to apply for a Thriving Congregations grant?

Two years ago, APLM organized a platform for posting and discussing issues of missional and liturgical life from its aligned members. While the platform was designed to be a website for uploading information on liturgical reform, it became clear that more robust incarnational moments were needed to break the norm – the overwhelming and suffocating mundanity that blankets and dulls the opportunity to break out and spark life. At CHS, we are on the cusp of new realignments with new members geared for assignment and service to the larger Church. And for the last three months, we have bemoaned the lack of comradery and partners to approach the COVID-19 crisis creatively, evenly and without panic. The opportunity to break the silo of individualism and competitiveness with community and collegiality in bold, substantive, attractive, and both rewarding and practical terms generated interest to apply for a Thriving Congregations grant.

5. Program Design

"Formation may be the best name for what happens in a circle of trust, because the word refers, historically, to soul work done in community." Parker Palmer

Pillar and Cloud allows members to share what they are doing with an online network of others who have made the same commitment. The website is not open to everyone because the intent is to create a safe space for the process of creativity – attempting, reflecting, admitting what does not work, and celebrating what does work.

Member congregations are gathered in triads and commit to meeting online with seven representative members from each congregation for six evenings a year as they plan for the coming church season. Triad groups will be sent preparatory materials prior to each engagement. The conversations are guided

among the three churches with a Conversation Curriculum developed to follow and share insights and challenges. The groups then offer posting and commenting on the Pillar and Cloud website for other constituent triads to access. Posts can also be in the form of questions, practical suggestions, or reflections on some aspect of liturgical theology or missional practice that any may want to open up for further dialogue. As Pillar and Cloud members meet and post what they are doing, ask questions, and comment on the posts of others, a rich resource is created. Member posts can be vetted and curated to be browsed from an open website and other forms of publication so that non-network congregations can have the benefit of the experience of others. As congregations engage in dialogue with each other through this platform, APLM and CHS anticipate that combined clusters will form for regular ongoing communication and occasional conferences and workshops. APLM additionally supports the work of Pillar and Cloud by providing ongoing consultation to constituent triads and larger plenary groups, including on-site visits where possible; creating and maintaining a website for both the facilitation of dialogue among participating churches and communication with the world at large; sponsoring or promoting conference, workshop, and other educational opportunities such as webinars and podcasts. We envision Pillar and Cloud congregations becoming leaders in their local convocations, dioceses, synods, and denominations.

What are the program's key activities?

The key activity is the triadic congregational conversation. Spellchecker has that as “conversion.” It turns out to be both conversation and conversion. Set on our own, each congregation may have substantial resources within themselves, but we do not, as yet, have a platform of engagement that challenges and prompts us to growth within a sustaining larger community. Diocesan and subset organisms are frequently unable to elevate and create vitality in local practice. The triad congregations meet remotely and are guided by the ancient spiritual practice of **Examen**, called here the Conversation Curriculum. The representatives of three congregations gathering in committed fashion regularly across a three-year span can generate deeper awareness of calling, clearer appreciation of their surroundings and particular challenges that need to be addressed, and the wider, larger cultural diseases to which a vital thriving congregation can attend. One key virtue of geographically dispersed triads is the reduction of competitiveness which undermines more localized associations; again, humanity frequently disappoints. Without motivation and accountability to change, insights are impotent. By gathering in discrete three-parish groups, guided by thoughtful deliberately prepared, and immediately useable resourcing query and content, such insights can now become operational.

Leaders from other thriving congregations not within the network can be interviewed on webinars and podcasts as models for growth and vitality, especially crossing cultural boundaries of race and ethnicity, language and economics.

What congregations will the program support? How will the applicant select congregations?

Diocesan leadership will be recruited to invite three congregations considered to be thriving and hospitable to an opportunity to engage at substantive levels. Each of the identified congregations will be interviewed and invited to participate from across the one hundred dioceses that comprise the

Episcopal Church and thirty-four dioceses of the Anglican Church of Canada and a welcome invitation for the whole of the ELCA. Self-referring congregations will be permitted to apply. Member congregations would be welcoming to the understanding of baptismal identity as stated in the addendum. The assignment to triads will be based on information gleaned at interview such as attendance patterns, budget, and program size. Triads may be grouped regionally, though not from the same jurisdiction, facilitating future in-person gatherings.

What existing and new resources are needed to implement the program?

We will leverage existing remote gathering platforms and contact management software (Salesforce). The new and crucial component is the Conversation Curriculum. The Conversation Curriculum is a series of guided conversations that discipline the triadic congregations to focus on elements of cultural change and resourcing to meet those changes, as well as uncovering aspects of their situation currently unexamined.

6. Congregational Learning Process

The most useless information is the right answer to the wrong question. Ursula K. LeGuin

Explore and deepen their understanding of social and cultural trends that affect them?

A deliberate “Conversation Curriculum” is the basis of the initial phase of the triadic congregations. Guided questions will not only introduce the geographically dispersed communities to each other, as well as the individuals representing those churches, but also direct the conversation to the challenges in their changing environment, sharing strengths and successes in prayer and action, creative problem solving, resource gathering, and reporting out to the platform.

Learn about their immediate neighborhoods, towns, cities, regions and/or broader areas of concern through face-to-face encounters as well as research and study?

The seasonal Conversation Curriculum includes questions of missional identity and practice, the sharing of current habitus, and the distinctive challenges of differing neighborhood climates. A thorough query of those conditions will reveal areas of shallow knowledge and potential growth of perspective leading to reorientation of the community. Asking the right questions includes the questions no one has thought to ask – yet.

Gain greater clarity about their values and mission in light of their changing contexts?

Strategies for identifying developing missional action and calling are available today: adaptive leadership, appreciative inquiry, etc. - it’s a long list. That communities fail to find clarity is not for lack of an approach, but of deployment and execution. Ongoing conversation among peer groups can lead to higher levels of strategical planning deployment.

Deepen understandings of their ecclesial traditions and denominational relationships and how they shape and expand their ministry opportunities?

Seasonal materials, providing both theological and liturgical background papers, as well as principle resources for mission activities such as anti-racism training, with formational programs and liturgical forms adaptable to local circumstance, will be included for study in preparation for each triadic meeting. These include webinars, podcasts, concise essays, and other formats. At the outset of the COVID-19 crisis, we had clergy waving their hands over the elements in empty churches and inviting people to hold bread up to their monitors at home as a means of “virtual communion” in total abandon and disregard of both episcopal oversight and 2000 years of historical precedent and despite all our training and canons. This activity suggests we all need help to stay the course and thrive. It must be granted that in desperate times, kindness even toward those making extreme choices is a requirement. Had we a network of highly engaged congregations, in communion and resourced properly, such egregious though understandable excesses could be avoided. Deepening ecclesial tradition and understanding can be widely shared to all members of the congregation with programs developed in common with other parishes.

Identify an area of ministry in which the congregation has the greatest passion, gifts and sense of calling?

In our local circumstance, ministry with inmates at the only women’s correctional institution in our state (NJ) has elicited support from those not directly participating in tutoring, crochet ministry, worship and bible study, as well as producing a waiting list of volunteers. If “our mission is to follow Christ as we serve others,” and we continuously act on this idea, we are bound to attract attention. But reaching those who are in need of kindness and compassion extends to senior housing, homeless family care, food distribution, and elevation of social justice concerns more globally. Since all efforts are intergenerational, groups by families, and all ages, are interspersed throughout the year. The CHS Good Friday Day of Service is a sought-after event, where all take the day in service around the county, again in various groupings of parishioners, praying on the hour, and returning for plenary worship and supper. These kinds of activities, blending worship and mission, are models to share. What are other communities doing that can expand and redirect our own passions and gifts? If it’s only up to clergy to trade ideas every so often, undisciplined, irregular and clerical, how’s that going to work out? This is a question already with an answer.

Use Christian practices as described to provide both the theological framework and integrative patterns of activity needed to energize and bring coherence to congregational life?

The Pillar and Cloud network is a substantial expansion of the **Examen** discipline. Ignatius Loyola’s **Examen** is employed worldwide and across denominations as a time of personal reflection, an opportunity for peaceful daily reflective prayer. The **Examen** is a set of introspective prompts for you to follow or adapt to your own character and spirit. It begins with a pause and a slow, deep breath or two; becoming aware that you are in the presence of the Holy. We are expanding the tradition and guiding it to become community-based but after the same inspired pattern, to *in-spire*, to breathe. We fail to give

ourselves breathing room. One of the side-effects of the COVID-19 trauma is readily acknowledged appreciation for quiet space and the attenuation of the frantic. Three congregations gathering for reflection, guided by introspective prompts, adapted to their own character and spirit, can draw out a path for vitality and mission previously neglected or undiscovered. When a community realizes another community or two is holding them in prayer and constancy of growing affection and support, those gathered for mission and worship will find new energy and purpose. The challenge and threat of change to individuals within a congregation can be reframed within the context of the triad groups. A larger purpose can lead to new self-understanding of God's call.

Build a sense of community among members of the congregations?

"Is it his family who never learned the art of making conversation because they only talk to people they know? A slow and terrible death, asphyxiation in your own past." Garrison Keillor

Community is built through honest communication and excited passionate hope that what we do together has meaning. Vital community is all that, but with the addition of meaning beyond itself, its own life, its own limited space of place and time, and all the other demographic demerits of our usual associations: race, economic status, political bent, sexual identity, etc. Proclaiming a sense of movement with purpose creates excitement within a community. There is nothing as energizing as packing for a trip except for going on that trip. Congregations that are vital are moving. And talking about it. Imagine the excited, slightly anxious chatter at coffee hour about what this might mean, all this Pillar and Cloud business, and how we can be better Christians together with new friends and shared hope!

Learn about how they can strengthen their governance and leadership practices to support the restructuring of current or launching of new ministries?

"We can put the chairs in a circle, but as long as they are occupied by people who have an inner hierarchy, the circle itself will have a divided life, one more form of "living within the lie": a false community." Parker J. Palmer

Development of new models of community, be they start-up companies or church networks, is the consideration of organizational hygiene from the outset. In 2006, I took on the role of Executive Director for a startup non-profit early intervention center in Central NJ. The crushing lack of services for children on the autism spectrum was devastating to its founder - an extremely successful entrepreneur whose own son was diagnosed with the disorder and who had to cobble together successful treatments. The lack of easily accessible support sparked him to open up a center for early intervention, but he needed familiarization with the social sector. Proper governance and leadership structures put in place at the outset of startup have led the Uncommon Thread to be the single largest provider of ABA in the state, both through in-home and center-based instruction. Attending to current formal and informal structures of decision making is part of core conversations in the initial gatherings. The constituent practices of a denominational subsidiary church, and as importantly, the informal permission-granting tree that frequently dominates a church, are necessary to name, respect, and, where indicated, adjust

so as to foster vitality. Such naming, respecting and adjusting can take place with greater comfort if embedded in a view toward and justification for growth.

Establish and nurture deeper relationships with organizations and individuals in their local neighborhoods, towns, cities, regions or across the globe as appropriate in furtherance of their refocused and clarified mission, purpose and focal areas of concern?

“In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Who comes to your church and who doesn't are equally important questions for the Pillar and Cloud **Examen**. What can we do about racism? About global climate change? About sexual misconduct? About fair and equitable provision of health care, extreme global poverty? All these and so many other “abouts” are overwhelming. Taking any first step in any direction seems the accepted approach. But gathering, exploring, connecting, holding open new possibilities, cogitating and ruminating together and especially talking about uncomfortable things will prompt authentic new directions less from the pangs of guilt or spasms of anger but from a deep and sustainable connection of the peculiar identity of the local community as it sees what has too long been ignored. Developing authentic and integrated relationship to those organizations and individuals will last longer than one-offs and loud expressions of prophetic disgust. Can a congregation in communication with another – especially from a different demographic makeup– discover something new? Don't bet against it.

7. Outcomes and Evaluation – Provide a description of the program's anticipated outcomes and an evaluation plan that explains the process of assessment. How will the applicant capture what is learned from the program's activities?

Horizontal accumulation of programs, projects, liturgies, and missional activities are essentially curated and posted by the triad groups themselves on the discrete website of Pillar and Cloud. Prompted by the Coordinator to ensure compliance, these postings will provide a significant window for the evaluative process, coupled with base data of meeting attendance and frequency. The selection and integration of material for public use will occur on an annual basis at a conference to edit the disparate material for publishing on the public website and disseminating to larger denominational committees.

8. Leadership – Identify key leaders for the program. Who are the program's key leaders and what roles and responsibilities will they have in implementing this effort?

Coordinator/Secretary APLM/Rector CHS: responsible for creating HR committee for staff hires, coordinating with recruiters for assignments and results.

Admin: Familiar with Salesforce, web design and editing, composition and graphic design, social media and other communications. Overseeing invites and collecting data on triad meets and assisting in the posting of information from network members.

Recruiters: regionally assigned for contacts with bishops and congregations, vetting prospects and developing initial interview structure.

Tech Support: Part-time management of platform and all tech activities from online meeting groups.

Financial Oversight: Sally Bird, Oscar Jones, pro-bono accountants.

Curriculum Design—drafting and ongoing: APLM Council

9. Communication –

See Program design above. Information will be distributed to national organizations for mission and liturgy, including: The Episcopal Office for Evangelism, Reconciliation and Creation Care, The Office of Social Justice and Advocacy Engagement, and Department of Faith Formation. Results of practices from the thriving congregations will be collated, catalogued and disseminated to all relevant national offices.

What communication tools will the applicant employ and why?

As mentioned, web-based communication and social media platforms will be deployed to share insights and resources for non-network use, garnering increased interest and buy in.

10. Organizational Support and Partnerships – see addendum letter from the President of APLM Describe any current or anticipated partners who will participate in the program’s implementation.

We anticipate building close relationships with provincial and national staff members and soliciting their intellectual and financial resources as we develop the curriculum.

11. Anticipated Obstacles – Describe any anticipated obstacles in implementing the program.

Initial obstacles are time and focus of the targeted enrollment congregations. We are all feeling “zoomed out.” Personal contact and follow-up will be required to overcome hesitancy and diffused interest. The compelling value of the resources available and vetted by actual “end users” coupled with narratives of the virtue of common life among collaborative congregations will need to be articulated for clarity and impact.

What are key strategies for addressing these challenges and what initial or ongoing technical assistance will be needed to address anticipated challenges?

Personal contact. Personal contact. Personal contact. The already well-established organization of APLM will leverage its pedigree and vast array of professional missional relationships to generate the prospective communities. While it may seem contraindicated for a religious organization, the use of Salesforce contact management software will greatly expand the reach and effectiveness of the recruitment phase, but also provide a key support for ongoing relations, follow up and development, inclusive of network publishing of insights and resources. The Secretary assisted in the start-up and build out of an early childhood intervention center (<http://theuncommonthread.org/index.html>). Now the largest provider of ABA services in central NJ, The Uncommon Thread’s use of Salesforce has been key in providing and maintaining services to this vulnerable population. Salesforce is free to non-profits, making it especially attractive for use in this arena. An experienced administrator in the maintenance and support of Salesforce will obviously be an essential need.

12. Sustainability and Continuation. How will new sources of funding be cultivated to replace grant dollars?

The initial grant provides the contact-intensive recruitment and initiation phase both in pastoral guidance and oversight as well as technical support during network startup. The program will be self-sustaining through annual commitments/subscriptions per congregation as well as larger adjudicatory bodies. We will be able to fund the network in year four and beyond through these modest subscription of approximately \$500 as well as diocesan and national support which is sure to appreciate the obvious effectiveness and attractive energy of the goals and reality of living into the promise of Christ (*when two or three . . .*).

How will other institutional and intellectual resources be secured to sustain the program?

The Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission, as an organization with depth of personnel and expertise and length of operation, will maintain Pillar and Cloud. The project has intrinsic support, as it has been established in nascent form (already on line). APLM is peopled by practitioners and professors from across the seminaries and parishes of North America.

Who will be in charge of long-term development and fundraising? How will development and fundraising activities be staffed and funded?

The Secretary, in coordination with Ex-Com and Council Members, will continue in developing the ongoing life and health of Pillar and Cloud. Periodic assistance from individual member congregations and member diocesan organizations is intended to create a healthy base of funding after a three- to five-year horizon built on annual subscriptions. As APLM has existed primarily as a non-stipendiary influencer, the pattern of intellectual support and contribution to the ongoing revisions and additions to the network are customary to the members. Connections to larger organizations in the church will provide other opportunities for resources, but the primary needs of a light staff are planned to be met through subscriptions. Development and oversight of fundraising activities will be under the cover of the Secretary, reporting to the Ex-Com. Supervision of the fiduciary life of Pillar and Cloud will be maintained by home office staff and volunteers operating through Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit, Lebanon, NJ where annual auditing and monthly reporting can be maintained to standard accounting practice and in coordination with the Treasurer of APLM, reporting to Ex-Com.