

Annual Convention Report

The 132nd Annual Convention of The Diocese of West Missouri



We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us. Romans 12: 5-6

We are blessed to have a variety of ministries and projects in the southern deanery, even though we had hurdles, and anxieties along the way due to the continuation of our situation with COVID19. But I am grateful to report that our churches, ministries, and clergy have done a wonderful job of caring for the needs of the community setting an example that nothing can stop us from living our Baptismal Covenant.

The Ministry of The Budget Assessment Committee

The grant committee of the Southern Deanery approved fourteen grant requests. This short report shows you the amount of money we distributed to each congregation for their ministries including St. Anne's, Lee's+ Summit, which is not in the Southern Deanery.

1	<p>Bolivar, St. Alban's in the Ozarks</p> <p>St. Alban's serves a community that is searching for a God who is loving, welcoming, and liberating. We are surrounded by the members of Southern Baptist, Assemblies of God churches in Bolivar. We provide the people of our small community a place to gather, worship, and fellowship without being judged for being who they are. 2020 had been a difficult year for all of us because of the Pandemic. We found ourselves not equipped to handle the technological demands of 2020 and beyond to meet our call to Evangelization and Christian Formation. We want to catch up to the demands of the time and install a live-streaming system that can handle the demands of our small congregation here in Bolivar so that we can conduct worship, prayer, preaching, and teaching online on Sundays and other days of celebration now and even after we gather, so we reach a larger community around us. To equip our small congregation with everything that is necessary to meet this goal, we need a good computer, a web camera, and condenser microphones to create a live streaming setup so that</p>	\$2,000
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paint, sealer, and furnishings we have estimated to be an additional \$2,000. We already have donations which include cement benches, an arbor bench, bird baths, statues, and a water fountain.

4 **Lebanon, Trinity** **\$3,500**

Our project is direct support of Project 360 Youth Services in Lebanon MO. They maintain a resource center for homeless and at-risk teenagers. They have served over 600 teens since they opened in 2015, offering them resources, including counseling, to help them overcome their challenges to achieve a successful adulthood. We have members service on the board of directors, and as volunteer mentors to these youth and providers of hot meals for the youth on a regular basis. All funding has been used for direct client services and no salaries are paid by these requested donated funds.

5 **Monett, St. Stephen's** **\$3,250**

Tri-County Pregnancy Resource Center. The Center's vision is to be a pro-life voice of biblical believers working together to create a culture of strong families. They offer free and confidential resources such as pregnancy tests, limited ultrasounds, counseling, educational classes such as parenting, fatherhood and abstinence, material goods and referrals to other related helpful agencies and support groups.

Scott Regional Technical Center. SRTC is a shared time career and technical educational school that on average has about 500 students in attendance. SRTC has 16 career and technical educations programs helping to prepare students with disabilities to obtain meaningful career-related employment. We have for the past couple of years provided the teachers and staff with a deli-style lunch to express our admiration and thanks for the job they do with these special children.

Lutheran Braille Workers. This is the largest Christian ministry in the world that provides braille and specialized large print bibles free of charge for people who are blind or visually impaired. St. Stephen's still has at least one parishioner, Linda Schelin, that volunteers with the local group.

Children's Center. The center provides victim assistance services for sexually abused and/or physically abused children, ages birth through 17, and their families. Victims and families can benefit through consistent and prompt follow-up to abuse reports, crisis intervention, consistent and compassionate support for the child and family, as well as referrals to professionals with expertise in specialized fields.

6 Ozark, St. Matthew's \$1,500

St. Matthew's has a feeding ministry providing meals to everyone on Wednesday evenings. We also have a small pantry from which we provide limited non-perishable foods to anyone in need. We are working to make this as environmentally friendly as possible using bio-degradable plates and cup. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic we have closed down our in-person meals and we have given the grant money to Least of These, the Christian Co. food pantry.

7 Springfield, Christ \$500

Our project is to set up a stable network connection to allow for the live streaming of Sunday services at Christ Episcopal Church. We have the equipment to record and sync audio and video and a high-speed internet plan, but we will need additional cabling installed to our sacristy to allow for a hardwired connection to a laptop that will broadcast our stream.

8 Springfield, St. James' \$ 2,000

Red Door Ministries and Online Presence is an outreach and evangelization hand of St. James. Red Door Podcasts and Online Ministries reach far and

wide through our podcasts and streaming services. So far, we have tracked listenership for our programs from 19 countries. The analytics show that we have an average daily attendance of prayer, bible study, and retreats of 35 people on weekdays and over 150 people on weekends.

9 **St. Anne's, Lee's Summit (Migration Ministries)** **\$4,250**

10 **Springfield, St. John's** **\$3,500**

PROJECT: FEED HUNGRY CHILDREN IN OUR COMMUNITY WEEKEND FOOD BACKPACK PROGRAM AND STAR STORE AT BOWERMAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL St. John's church has been providing food for the children of low-income families in our vicinity. Of nearly 300 students at Bowerman Elementary School, 90% participate in the free or reduced-price lunch program. Students of color comprise 21% of the school. Bowerman is located nearby St. John's Church and a number of parishioners attended. Our request is in support of Ozark Food Harvest's wonderful monthly backpack program, in which Bowerman School in our parish's neighborhood is a major participant. The bags include food for six meals and two snack items plus beverages. A second meaningful project is the school's Star Store, where pupils can benefit from good attendance and other appreciated positive behavior to obtain "credits" to acquire snacks and other valued items to enhance their daily life.

Southern Deanery Clericus

Southern Deanery Clergy met once a month and most of our gatherings online were pretty well attended, even though we regret that not many of our bi-vocational clergies were able to attend them as often as they would have liked.

We are grateful for the ministry of Fr. Tim Coppinger who left for St. Paul's in Lee Summit. We are grateful to Fr. Ken Chumley, Christ Church, Springfield; Fr. Frank Sierra at St. Phillips, Joplin; Fr. Ross Stuckey, Shepherd of the Hills, Branson; Mother Paula Lively, St. Stephen's, Monett, for their services in the Southern Deanery. We wish them God's blessings as they have retired from these congregations they served for years. We are delighted to welcome Fr. Jim Harris,

West Plains. Mother Cathy Cox is now Priest-In-Charge at St. Alban's, Bolivar, even though she had been doing this ministry without a title for a very long time. We are happy to have Fr. Bob Seney as the new Priest-In-Charge at Shepherd of the Hills in, Branson. We also have several people in discernment for Holy Orders from Southern Deanery Congregations and we are blessed to raise up more people to ministry.

We are also heartbroken for the illness of Fr. Steve Wilson, Rector at Grace Church, Carthage, but grateful to God for the faith, grace, and example he is to us, even in his suffering.

However, we do have ongoing challenges considering the COVID19 restrictions and reconfiguration of our ministry in this new world we are in. Every clergy and lay leader in our congregations are learning to adjust to the new reality and invent new ways of reaching out and keeping the community healthy.

Respectfully submitted by
The Very Rev. Jos Tharakan
Dean, Southern Deanery of the Diocese of West Missouri.