

St. Aidan's Episcopal Church
Ann Arbor, MI

Appeal for Modification of Diocesan Apportionment
May 15, 2009

Tithes and Offerings Committee of the Diocesan Council
Episcopal Diocese of Michigan
4800 Woodward Ave.
Detroit, MI 48201

Dear Friends:

We are writing an appeal for modification of our Diocesan Apportionment for 2009. If you have questions, please contact our Rector, Rev. Dr. Susan McGarry or myself. We thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Ruth Frances Board
Senior Warden 2009

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A. Rationale for Nonpayment of Apportionment

We write on behalf of the vestry of St. Aidan's Episcopal Church to request a reduction of 100% in our Diocesan apportionment for the calendar year 2010. St. Aidan's has for the past several years experienced severe financial difficulties that are exacerbated by the challenged economy of Michigan and, in particular, the closing of the Pfizer operation in Ann Arbor. Several of our parish families have relocated to other states for employment or health reasons. In addition a high proportion of our congregation is now fighting life threatening health conditions or facing economic loss from jobs and careers cut short. We rely mainly on the freewill offering of members for core financial support.

Until 2007, St. Aidan's had always paid its diocesan apportionment even though declining membership had forced us to reduce the rector's position to 75% and severely cut our mission spending. More recently we have had to reduce the rector's appointment again, to 60% in 2009. We want to work toward raising both of these items as well as restoring our diocesan contribution should you agree to reduce it. Our congregation already practices good stewardship in many ways. Even as our numbers have been declining our income has been increasing, though not enough to handle the rising costs. Our building and the natural area of our grounds are community resources. For us, church growth is vital. Our Evangelism Committee is working very hard to both invite and welcome people to our congregation. We know this community and its ministry has a lot to offer God and the world.

B. Strategic plan:

Scenario 1: In this scenario we return to full diocesan apportionment, a full-time rector, our traditional 10% mission giving, and maintain 25% of budget for building and all other expenses. This can be accomplished by increasing pledge income by about 15% per year. We will work toward an average increase of 10% in current pledges through better stewardship education for current pledgers, and an increase of two to three new pledging units per year, through a combination of new members and better stewardship education for current members.

Scenario 1

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Income		19%	16%	19%	17%	15%

Pledges	87500	104500	121500	144500	169500	194500
Fundraisers	6000	6500	7000	8000	9000	9500
Loose and other	10000	11000	12000	13500	14500	16000
Expenses						
Rector	60%	65%	70%	80%	90%	100%
	76000	82000	89000	101000	114000	127000
Mission	1000	4000	7000	11000	15000	19000
Diocese	0	4000	7000	11000	15000	19000
Other	26500	32000	37500	43000	49000	55000
Total	103500	122000	140500	166000	193000	220000
current						
pledges	87500	96250	105875	116463	128109	140920
new pledges		8250	15625	28038	41391	53580
number of						
pledges	30	33	34	37	40	41

Scenario 2: In this scenario we return to full Diocesan apportionment but maintain current levels of funding for all other expenses. This scenario can be met if pledge income increases by about 2.5% each year. Adding one pledging unit per year and encouraging growth of current pledges with stewardship education can accomplish this.

Scenario 2

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Income				
Pledges	87500	91000	95000	99000
Fundraisers	6000	6000	6000	6000
Loose and other	10000	10000	10000	10000
Expenses				
Rector	60%	60%	60%	60%
	76000	76000	76000	76000
Mission	1000	1000	1000	1000
Diocese	0	3500	7500	11500
Other	26500	26500	26500	26500
Total	103500	107000	111000	115000

C. Parochial Reports Last Three Years

Parochial Reports are attached for the last three years (Attachment A)

D. Full Financial Accounting including, but not limited to, budgets proposed and actual for the past three years, pledges and offerings, and annual audit/reviews.

The complete and actual budget for 2006 is attached. (Attachment B)

Due to the fact that there was no treasurer for the year 2007, financial statements were not prepared on a regular basis. We reconstructed the 2007 accounts in preparation of the parochial report, but there was no yearend statement.

Audit for 2008 is attached. (Attachment C)

The audits for 2006 and 2007 are in process, but have been delayed because the records for those years are still being compiled. In 2006 the church accepted the volunteer services of an inexperienced treasurer who did not keep complete records. In 2007 the parish was without a treasurer. We have no reason to believe there were any financial improprieties in those years, but the records are not yet in condition to be audited.

E. A complete and accurate report of all current expenses and the amount thereof, including salaries

The Operating Fund, Calendar Year 2009, including all current expenses and the amount thereof, including salaries, is attached. (Attachment D)

F. A complete and accurate list and description of all assets: real estate and other property held with an indication of their fair market value, investments, endowments including any restrictions

St. Aidan's property was valued on January 2, 2008, by Church Mutual. Real Estate and Personal Property is valued at \$973,815. St. Aidan's is 50% owner, which is \$486,907.50.

G. A statement of all liens and encumbrances upon the same of any part thereof.

There are no liens and encumbrances upon our property or any part of it.

H. Current mission statement and priorities and how they are being lived out.

"St. Aidan's Episcopal Church is committed to experiencing and demonstrating God's love through Eucharistic worship, prayer, study, and action. We strive to be a nurturing, spiritual Christian community, strengthened by the participation of our members, the example of our youth, and our collaboration with our sister congregation, Northside Presbyterian Church. We embrace diversity and seek to understand it. With our partners in faith and community, we endeavor to be good stewards of all God's creation and to speak out for justice."

St. Aidan's also has a vision statement, which focuses on our priorities:

"The Church in the Woods that demonstrates God's love through Inclusive Community, thoughtful Exploration, and Loving Service.

The following description provides select examples of priorities (outside worship, of course).

St. Aidan's traditionally and presently has been known in the Ann Arbor community for an emphasis on inclusive community. We share this value with our sister congregation, Northside Presbyterian. In both congregations, members and visitors who may not meet the norm of the population or who lead marginal lives in terms of meeting basic needs are welcomed with joy and grace. New members sometimes express that they feel comfortable at St. Aidan's, and that is a new experience in churches.

Thoughtful exploration describes our emphasis on adult Christian education, which historically has focused on scholarly study of Biblical and societal social issues. Formal education for children includes both Sunday School between services and the Learning Center, a unique multi-age "one room school house of Christianity" during the 11:00 service. The timing of the Learning Center is to accommodate the needs of worshipping parents who are able only to attend an hour plus service on Sunday. We have also had periodic Tape and discussion programs open to the community such as "Via Media" and "Living the Questions".

Loving service includes both long-standing and more current social action involvements. Examples include volunteer participation in a men's overnight shelter held at the church in the winter, serving meals at the homeless shelter in Ann Arbor, letter-writing projects for "Bread for the World", and multiple instances of direct specific help to both members and non-members of the congregation. These instances include transportation, educational

mentoring, housing shelter in our own homes or appendages, and help to clients trying to apply for social services. Recently Avalon Housing, an Ann Arbor system providing housing for those in need, has created a sanctuary for mothers with families at top of St. Aidan's driveway. We are involved in discussions of how to be of direct service.

St. Aidan's has traditionally been known in the community for promoting social justice for all. The Rector and others are very active in community groups such as Interfaith Council For Peace and Justice (ICPJ), Religious Action for Affordable Housing (RAH), and Ozone House, a counseling center for troubled teens. Our building shared with Northside Presbyterian hosts Twelve Step Groups six out of seven nights.

I.Strategic Plan for Enacting the Vision of God in Our Community.

Last fall, our Rector began discussions within the congregation about how we could define ourselves succinctly and establish a dedicated mission. Three surveys were completed by the congregation: (1) Week 1 - The Personal and Intuitive (2) Week 2 - Practical and Logical analysis and (3) Week 3 – Matching Needs, Assets, and Interests. The results showed that the congregants value a focus on our naturalistic setting in a missionary context (five acres of environmental beauty), and service to others. Consequently, at our Vestry Retreat in February of this year, the Vestry and other parish leaders created three possible draft ideas for a dedicated ministry. Working within separate committees, participant representatives made three presentations to the congregation in the early spring. The principle criteria for decision making in the congregation involved the following: (1) Something St. Aidan's could do well and may be uniquely ours to do (2) Projects that could start small and grow with our capacity to support them (3) Projects that inspire enthusiasm in the St. Aidan's community. Finally, (4) Projects that will positively impact the wider community and demonstrate God's love.

The Vestry considered three projects and offered them to the congregation for voting.

I.Educational Outreach at St. Aidan's. The types of educational support suggested include Pre GED tutoring, GED tutoring, homework help, and English as a second language. Under the potential context of "St. Aidan's learning Lab", the program might cover a host of services gradually developed commensurate with our capacity to serve and the clientele we can attract.

II.Nature Education Outreach Proposal: The types of nature education suggested include educational trail walks hosted by members and/or guest experts, exercise stations, liaison with various Ann Arbor community groups

and especially the nearby community, Children's education, Spiritual supports such as Stations of the Cross, special Days on the Christian calendar, settings for meditation and prayer, and summer day camps.

III. Retreat Ideas for Outreach: Two pathways emerged: one is designed for the needs of our immediate community. The second is an offering of various spiritual retreats for vulnerable populations. Examples include "Jesus and the Twelve Steps", Coping for the Unemployed", and "Swimming Against the Tide: Simplicity in a Consumer Culture". Several of our members, in addition to the Rector, can lead these retreats.

In conclusion, Project # 3 received the most votes and will be jump-started by the committee that wrote it plus other enthusiastic participants.