



Western Association

Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ

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January 8, 2024

Greetings to our Western Association Churches! Your Western Association Council is excited to announce that the Leonhart Fund grant program is available once again in 2024.

The Helen Leonhart Fund originated with a generous bequest which provides annual grants to provide assistance with funding new projects, ministries, and initiatives in our Western Association congregations and related church ministries and organizations. Many churches in our Association have applied after identifying needs in their communities to which they creatively responded with assistance from this fund. Now is your opportunity to do likewise and discern how your congregation might be able to live into new callings and serve in your communities with the help of additional funding through the Leonhart Fund. You can find additional information on this fund and its origin on the Illinois Conference website.

The timeline for the 2024 Leonhart Fund grant cycle:

January 8: New link available for Leonhart Fund application on Illinois **Conference** website. Hard copies of all information will also be mailed to WA congregations on this date.

March 1: Applications are due.

March: Leonhart Committee meets to discuss & make recommendations (via Zoom).

March 17: Western Association Council Meeting (zoom at 3:30 p.m.) will act on Leonhart Committee recommendations. Grantees notified immediately by email.

April: Checks requested from Conference Office.

Spring Association meeting: Grantees will receive their checks, be introduced, and will offer short presentations on how they will use the funds.

As you begin discernment regarding your application, it is important to highlight that these grants are specifically intended to be used as seed money for a new project that your congregation is envisioning and imagining. We cannot wait to see the new ways God is leading and calling you in your ministries!

With peace and grace,

Your Western Association Council Leonhart Committee:

Bob Meinershagen

Ken Harding

Bob Tallitsch

Ursula Webster