**ILLINOIS CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**1840 Westchester Boulevard, Westchester, Illinois 60154**

**Dr. Jorge L. Morales, Conference Minister**

**LOCAL EVANGELISM, ENVISIONING, AND PLANTING (LEEAP)**

**BACKGROUND DATA: LEEAP** is charged with engaging the evangelistic mission of the Illinois Conference and inviting all people to become disciples of Jesus Christ through new church development and existing church revitalization. LEEAP is authorized by Conference Council to help administer the Church Extension Fund; the Equipping Leaders Fund; the Strengthen the Church Offering Fund, as designated for new and renewed church development and youth ministry; funds from the “Into the Future” Capital Campaign, designated for new and renewed church development; and to coordinate other potential funding and partnering with our national office for Local Church Ministries.

**The Church Extension Fund** is made possible by the Conference Council authorizing the receivership of property given by churches that have disbanded. Upon receipt of such property, it is designated for use by an existing congregation that needs it, repurposing, or being sold, with the proceeds being put into the LEEAP Fund for use in new church development and the revitalization of existing churches.

**APLICATION DEADLINE:** September 1st of the year prior to distribution of funds

**CRITERIA:** Typically, we fund two types of projects: New Church Starts and Revitalization of Existing Churches/ Congregations.

 **New Church Starts:**

* Critical mass to begin ministry
* Ministry team who will provide leadership for the ministry
* Evangelism strategy that will appeal to the community
* Ministry that will identify and address a targeted community
* Provide for continuity of ministry and service in the community
* Clearly identified goals and objectives
* Quarterly reporting of progress is required
* Funding requires the endorsement of the Associate Conference Minister serving the area of the New Church Start

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**Continuation of Criteria:**

**Revitalization of Existing Churches:**

* Program must address the needs of a particular population
* Program should have an evangelism component
* Churches must support Our Church’s Wider Mission
* Programs must have the potential to become self-sustaining
* Programs must have very clearly defined, measureable goals and objectives
* Churches must evidence some measure of vitality and energy
* Churches must report their progress every six months
* Funding will not provide for existing staff, only new staff to support the project
* Funding does not provide for physical/facility improvements to property
* Funding requires the endorsement of the Associate Conference Minister serving in the project area
* After receiving funding for revitalization for a period of three years, applicants are not eligible to apply again until a period of two years without funding has elapsed.

**FUNDING LIMITATIONS:**

New Church Starts – up to $ 35,000 for the first year, with eligibility for funding over five years on a declining scale with new applications for each additional year.

Revitalization Projects – up to $ 15,000 for the first year, with the potential for funding up to two additional years, on a declining/decreasing scale, with the submittal of a new application for each additional year.

**TYPICAL PROCESS:**

 Application are received and reviewed by LEEAP.

 Meetings, telephone calls, and site visit are made to determine the viability of the project.

 Funding recommendations are made to the Conference Council.

If approved by Conference Council, funds begin to flow after the 1st quarter in the funding year and every quarter thereafter with completion of distribution by December 31st.

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