

The Episcopal Church Building Fund

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SUMMARY OF WORK

The Episcopal Church Building Fund (ECBF) was established by General Convention in 1880 as the American Church Building Fund Commission, a self-supporting agency. The ECBF has been dedicated to the provision of loans for the erection, purchase, improvement, or repair of churches, rectories, parochial buildings, and properties of the Episcopal Church. During the last triennium the ECBF assumed management of the General Loan Fund portfolio of the Domestic & Foreign Missionary Society. The ECBF also assists congregations with the process of planning for a building project. The goal of this service is to provide the church with buildings that 1) are designed to support the ministries in which they will be engaged in the future, and 2) that they can afford to build and maintain.

To this end the ECBF provides these services:

I. Financial Assistance

Fixed rate, low interest, non-mortgage loans of up to \$200,000 are available to qualifying congregations within the United States; loans of up to \$100,000 are available to congregations throughout the Anglican communion. Loans are made to a diocese for the applying congregation. These monies are available from revolving loan funds. As loan demand increases, additional monies are secured through a Debenture investment program with Episcopal parishes, dioceses and organizations. Contributions to either the permanent loan fund or to support the ECBF's educational work are welcome.

II. Educational Resources

The ECBF produces a workbook for congregations, entitled *Church Sites and Buildings*, which outlines a planning and decision-making process designed to minimize conflict, set a manageable budget, and clarify the architectural implications of the ministries which the building design must support. Also published is *The Church for Common Prayer, A Statement on Worship Space for the Episcopal Church*, which sets forth the theological principals for worship space. A video, *Churches for Common Prayer, Buildings for the Liturgical Assembly*, provides a tour through two church buildings, one new and one traditional building which has been renovated. The video depicts the benefits of flexible space, and ways in which to make church buildings inviting to the newcomer. *The Builder* newsletter focuses on practical issues for parishes concerned with how well their buildings serve as tools for ministry. *The Builder* is mailed to every congregation, all other resources are available at a nominal cost.

III. Diocesan Workshops

The ECBF conducts free day-long workshops to introduce congregations to the building planning process. The workshop is designed for congregations planning a new building, renovation, or change of the building for the future. Topics include an overview of the planning process, how to build support for change, determining the budget, the congruence between the congregation and its building, and a slide show depicting the principles of liturgical design.

IV. Start Up! Start Over! Congregational Development Seminar

Understanding the relationship between congregational life cycle and buildings, the ECBF co-sponsors with Seabury Institute at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, the Start Up! Start Over! Congregational Development Seminar. Held each spring, the seminar is designed for those planting new congregations and those wanting new life for existing congregations where growth is in plateau or has declined. Experienced church growth practitioners lead this five day training. Topics include: determining if you are the leader for change, marketing the church for new members, new member incorporation, parallel development of the existing and next congregation, and the relationship between congregation size and programming.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE COMING TRIENNIUM

The ECBF Board of Trustees is currently engaged in a strategic planning process to set its course for the future. Current objectives of the ECBF for the triennium are:

- *Consultations:* To explore funding for the training of field-based associates of the ECBF to increase our ability to provide consultation to congregations;
- *Resources:* To expand the written and video resources available to the church for planning and designing buildings for ministry; and
- *Financial:* To be a source of loan funds for diocesan and for congregational building project.