



COLONIAL CHURCH

THE

BLESSING

20



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INITIATIVE

INTRODUCING THE INITIATIVES



**We're here! After a year and a half of dreaming about what God could do in our midst if we discerned with God how best to give away \$1 million, it's time to set the Blessing Initiative fully in motion.**

In the months leading up to this moment, we've been busy. Last spring, we pivoted to give \$200,000 to organizations on the frontlines of COVID-19 relief. Last month, we allocated \$20,000 each to five amazing organizations with plans to do significant Kingdom work – a total of an additional \$100,000 in Blessings. And you voted to give an additional \$5,000 to Community Emergency Services (CES).

**Now, it's time for what we call the Initiatives, the final four award winners.**

These projects and organizations were selected after a team of researchers did a deep dive, learning more about the projects, the organizations, and the people. Team members conducted extensive interviews and then came together for robust discussion about the applicants and how their projects fit with the values our church want to lift up. What made the Initiatives rise above the Blessings? The opportunity for meaningful and significant congregational engagement.

**Each Initiative is receiving a different amount of funding.**

Blessing Initiative applicants applied for funds at three levels: a baseline amount, a higher amount needed to reach the next level, and a "sky's the limit" dream amount, each level related to the specific projects and budgets being proposed. Understandably, a broad range in dollar amounts were requested, so the final awards also represent a range of amounts. Each Initiative received either their baseline request or a step above it.

And you can help your favorite project receive significantly more funding. In this mailing, Colonial members receive a ballot, and are invited to affirm and approve three things, including the project they're most excited about.

**The project with the most votes will receive an additional 50% of their initial award amount, while the project with the second highest vote total will receive an additional 25% of their initial award amount.**

Through our research and discernment, we're confident that each Initiative has meaningful uses for these additional amounts to further their missions and build a better community.

We invite you to turn the page and learn more about each of these four Initiatives and to prayerfully consider how God might be inviting you to get involved.

**And so, without further ado - the Initiatives!**

+ \$150,000 AWARD +

## AVIVO'S INDOOR VILLAGES



We will be part of a paradigm shift in helping people find – and maintain– stable homes. Because homelessness is intertwined with economic inequality, systemic racism, and lack of affordable health care, including mental health services, traditional approaches often do not get at the systemic problems themselves. Avivo's Indoor Village presents a truly innovative solution that offers a comprehensive and holistic approach to ending homelessness, which includes many creative opportunities for engagement with our congregation. Minneapolis is only the second city in the country to implement this model.

CHAMPION: JIM EATON



THE BLESSING INITIATIVE

+ \$100,000 AWARD +

## FREEDOMWORKS



FreedomWorks provides Christ-centered post-prison mentoring and assistance. Now it is developing a culinary arts curriculum in partnership with Chef Jeff Catering to teach and mentor FreedomWorks residents, many of whom are ex-offenders. Residents will be trained for jobs in the food service industry as well as jobs at FreedomWorks, where three meals a day will be prepared and served. Men and women from our congregation will have opportunities to volunteer as mentors, teachers and Bible Study group leaders, and to help with dinners and special events.

CHAMPION: RON DOBIES



+ \$175,000 AWARD +

## OASIS FOR YOUTH



Our church will help Oasis for Youth expand its highly-regarded program of assisting homeless and insecurely housed youth in the Bloomington, Richfield, and Edina area. Oasis is developing a mobile unit to improve access and increase visibility in the Crosstown corridor of Edina and Richfield. Because case managers are continually on the go, this will help them meet youth where they are. Our support will enable Oasis to outfit and staff a cargo van for meeting with and providing needed resources to youth. Volunteers from our congregation will have an opportunity to help by providing and stocking a resource closet to ensure that participants have adequate clothing, personal health, and hygiene items.

CHAMPION: JANE WILSON



THE BLESSING INITIATIVE

+ \$80,000 AWARD +

## WHITTIER WILDFLOWERS PRESCHOOL



Access to high-quality and affordable early childhood education is a significant problem in the Twin Cities, disproportionately impacting families of color. Our church community will assist Whittier Wildflowers in bridging this gap, by helping them increase their physical capacity and hire additional staff who are ethnically representative of the student population. Volunteers from our congregation will have the opportunity to be involved with classroom help, art project prep, fundraising/event planning committee work, parenting workshop planning/hosting, family workdays, and renovation assistance.

CHAMPIONS: ED & BERRIE LOUNSBERRY





## We hope you are inspired and excited by these Initiatives!

Information on how you can get involved with these projects will be coming soon. In the meantime, we invite you to learn more about these organizations on their websites. And feel free to contact the champions with specific questions.

### Avivo's Indoor Villages

Avivomin.org

Champion: Jim Eaton

612-310-4241

jim@synergismconsulting.com

### Oasis for Youth

Oasisforyouth.org

Champion: Jane Wilson

952-200-0377

jane.bonusroom@gmail.com



### FreedomWorks

Myfreedomworks.com

Champion: Ron Dobies

952-807-5598

rdobies@comcast.net

### Whittier Wildflowers Preschool

Whittierwildflowers.org

Champions: Ed & Berrie Lounsberry

952-451-6274 (Berrie)

edandberrie@yahoo.com

That's it! The Blessing Initiative is launched! And now, the real fun – and the good work – begins. Now we have the indescribable opportunity to join with God and collaborate with these partner organizations to watch their projects come to life. We get to join with the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe to bring God's Kingdom to earth. There's nothing better.

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**WWW.COLONIALCHURCH.ORG**  
**952.925.2711**



**THE BLESSING INITIATIVE**