

## Plymouth Congregational Church Foundation Grant Policy

The Plymouth Congregational Church Foundation (Foundation), under its Articles of Incorporation, has the charitable purpose and authority “to solicit and accept contributions, gifts, grants, funds, devises and bequests of personal or real property, or both, which along with the income therefrom shall be held, administered and expended exclusively for the use and direct benefit of Plymouth Congregational Church of the United Church of Christ, Des Moines, Iowa and the furtherance of its purposes.”<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Bylaws further provide that “grants will be awarded in accordance with a Grant Policy approved by the board [of directors of the Foundation], which shall address the categories of grants available, administration of grant applications and awards, and determination of funds available for grants.”<sup>2</sup>

This Plymouth Foundation Grant Policy (Grant Policy) has been adopted by the Board of Directors of the Foundation (Board) pursuant to the Bylaws for the purpose of describing the categories of grants that may be made by the Foundation, the administrative procedures under which such grants may be considered and approved, and the determination of funds available for grants.

- A. **Grant Categories.** The Foundation may award financial grants for the support of Plymouth Congregational Church of Des Moines, Iowa (Church), including ministry, programs and projects supported by and consistent with the mission of the Church, in the following categories:
1. **Competitive Grants.** On an annual basis, the Board may establish an amount of funds available to award for competitive grants (Competitive Grant Pool). These grants will be awarded on a competitive basis from the Competitive Grant Pool to fund ministries, programs and projects that are supported by and consistent with the mission of the Church. Competitive grants are not to be used for activities within the normal budget for operating expenses of the Church.
  2. **Strategic Grants.** The Board will award strategic grants to support activities, projects or needs of the Church that are not funded within the current operating budget. Strategic grant requests should be consistent with the outcomes of the Church’s strategic planning process and must be requested and endorsed by the Church’s Executive Committee and the Senior Pastor. At least annually as provided in Section B.3. below, the Board will determine the amount of funds available for strategic grants in excess of the Sustainability Fund (see Section A.3.), taking into consideration previously awarded but unfunded competitive and strategic grants, as well as the desirability of continuing a competitive grant program in future years. Of the funds available for strategic grants, not more than twenty-five percent (25%) may be committed in any year.
  3. **Sustainability Grants.** The Board shall reserve from the financial assets of the Foundation a Sustainability Fund to support the basic ministry and activities of the Church during times of unusual financial distress. The Sustainability Fund will also provide investment income which, along with new contributions to the Foundation, will support the competitive grant program and the capacity to award strategic grants. The Sustainability Fund shall be equal to two times the average annual operating budget of the Church for the prior three years. The amount required for the Sustainability Fund will be calculated and approved by the Board each year before any new competitive or strategic grants are awarded. Grants from the Sustainability Fund may only be made with the approval of at least seventy-five percent (75%) of the Foundation directors and

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<sup>1</sup> Articles of Incorporation of Plymouth Congregational Church Foundation dated December 18, 1998, Article III.

<sup>2</sup> Second Restated and Substituted Bylaws of Plymouth Congregational Church Foundation, effective November 21, 2017, Section 7.1.

seventy-five percent (75%) of the Church’s Executive Committee members. Grants from the Sustainability Fund may be made only to the extent that such grants, together with any other sustainability grants outstanding, do not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the Sustainability Fund.

4. **Designated Grants.** From any contributions accepted by the Foundation that are designated for particular purposes and therefore subject to use restrictions, the Board, upon recommendation from the Grant Committee, may approve designated grants from time to time that meet the requirements of the related use restrictions. Such designated grants will be administered independently of the competitive, strategic and sustainability grants otherwise provided for by this Grant Policy.

**B. Grant Administration.** Administration of the Foundation’s competitive and strategic grant programs, and determination of the funds available for each, shall take place as follows:

1. **Competitive Grant Program**

- a. **Competitive Grant Pool.** Not later than its February meeting each year, the Board may determine whether sufficient funds are available (see below) to offer a Competitive Grant program for that year. If sufficient funds are available, the Board may further determine the amount that will be available for competitive grant applications that are approved (Competitive Grant Pool), taking into account the funds available, the amounts awarded in prior years and the level of interest in the current year. The Board may modify the size of the Competitive Grant Pool at any time, provided sufficient funds are available. If the competitive grant applications approved during any year total less than the Competitive Grant Pool, unutilized funds will not automatically carryover to future annual competitive grant programs. The Competitive Grant Pool for each annual competitive grant program is determined independently.
- b. **Assessment Criteria.** To encourage competitive grant applications focused on particular types of projects or needs of the Church, the Board, in consultation with the Senior Pastor, may establish requirements, priorities or assessment criteria for awarding competitive grants prior to the commencement of any annual Competitive Grant program.
- c. **Schedule and Publicity.** The Foundation will establish and publish a schedule each year for the Competitive Grant program, to the extent such program is offered. This schedule will be communicated, along with any requirements and criteria for assessing the merit of competitive grant applications, to all Church boards and to Church members generally, including publication in *The Contact* newsletter and on the Church’s website. Unless otherwise decided by the Board, competitive grant applications will be reviewed, voted on by the Board and awarded two times per year as follows:

<u>Application Deadline</u>	<u>Foundation Decision</u>	<u>Award Date</u>
April 1	April Board Meeting	May 1
October 1	October Board Meeting	November 1

The Board may make exceptions to the published schedule and consider requests outside of this timeline if the purpose of the grant is time-critical. The Chair of the Grant Committee and the Board President will determine whether or not a

competitive grant application is time-critical, exceptional and appropriate for consideration by the Board outside of the published schedule.

- d. **Funding Requirements.** Competitive grant applications will be considered only for one year of funding. Multi-year projects must be identified as such in the initial grant application and need to apply for additional funding each year thereafter. Renewed funding will not be automatic, but will depend upon attainment of project outcomes, availability of funds and other competitive grant applications. However, the need for continued funding of multi-year projects will be considered during the initial approval process.
- e. **Applications.** Competitive grant applications must be submitted in writing to the Foundation before the published deadline. Applications must include at least the following information:
- Purpose of the request, who will be served, and desired outcomes/anticipated results;
  - Total itemized expense budget, grant request amount, and other income sources; and
  - Timetable for use of the funds.

The Foundation's Grant Committee may require that applications be on a particular form or include additional information. If the Board has established and announced criteria for assessing and awarding competitive grants, applications should include information relevant to such criteria. Competitive grant applications must identify a specific member of the Church who will act as grant sponsor. Competitive grant applications must be signed and endorsed by the sponsor, the chair of an official board or committee of the Church, and the Church staff member responsible for oversight of the requesting board or committee, who by so doing agree to comply with all Foundation policies and requirements pertaining to the grant.

- f. **Submission and Consideration of Applications.** Competitive grant applications must be channeled through and processed by the Grant Committee, not directed to individual Board members. The Grant Committee will review grant applications to ensure they are complete and ready for consideration by the Board, will assess the applications against any priorities or criteria previously established by the Board, and prioritize the applications for approval within the Competitive Grant Pool. The Grant Committee and the Board may request assistance in prioritizing competitive grant applications from the Church Board of Trustees or the Church Executive Committee. Grant applications will be presented to the Board for approval by the chair of the Grant Committee, along with assessments, prioritization and any other recommendations from the Grant Committee.
- g. **Awarding and Funding of Competitive Grants.** Competitive grant applications approved by the Board will be awarded according to the published schedule. The approved funding amount for each grant awarded will be reserved from the general funds of the Foundation. Disbursements may occur at any time thereafter upon written request from the grant applicant. Any reserved funds that are not utilized within one year of the grant award date will be returned to the general funds of the Foundation and become available for future competitive grant programs. Any extension of this deadline must be approved by the Board based on a written request, submitted by the grant sponsor before the expiration of the

one year funding period, which includes a report on the status of the project and justification for a funding extension. Approved funding extensions will not exceed 180 days.

- h. **Final Report.** A final report evaluating the outcomes/result of the project funded by each competitive grant awarded must be submitted to the Grant Committee by the grant sponsor no later than 60 days after the funds have been fully spent or one year following the grant date, whichever occurs first. Any funds disbursed by the Foundation but not spent by the grant applicant for the approved project must be returned to the Foundation.

## 2. **Strategic Grants.**

- a. **Purpose.** Strategic grants can be used to support special programs, capital improvements and maintenance, or other projects that are considered high priorities for the Church, consistent with the outcomes of its strategic planning process, but not readily funded through the current operating budget. Strategic grants may also be used as lead gifts or matching funds to jump-start fundraising campaigns, or as top-off funding when a campaign does not raise enough to fund a particular need.
- b. **Applications.** Strategic grant applications must be submitted in writing to the Foundation and must include at least the following information:
  - Purpose of the request, who will be served, and desired outcomes/anticipated results;
  - Total itemized expense budget, grant request amount, and other income sources; and
  - Timetable for use of the funds.

The Foundation's Grant Committee may require that applications be on a particular form or include additional information. Strategic grant applications must identify a specific member of the Church who will act as grant sponsor. Strategic grant applications must be signed and endorsed by the sponsor, the chair of an official board or committee of the Church, the Senior Pastor, and the Church's Executive Committee, who by so doing agree to comply with all Foundation policies and requirements pertaining to the grant.

- c. **Funding Requirements and Limitations.** Strategic grant applications may be considered for one-time funding of an appropriate project or activity, as well as for multi-year or delayed funding of a longer term project or activity. Any capital improvement project for which funds are being requested must reside on the list of prioritized capital projects created and approved by the Church's Building and Grounds Committee and the Church's Board of Trustees.
- d. **Submission and Consideration of Applications.** Strategic grant applications may be submitted at any time. Strategic grant applications must be channeled through and processed by the Grant Committee, not directed to individual Board members. The Grant Committee will review grant applications to ensure they are complete and ready for consideration by the Board. The Grant Committee and the Board may request the sponsors of any strategic grant application to present their proposal in-person to the Board and answer questions. Grant applications will be presented to the Board for approval by the chair of the Grant Committee, along with any recommendations from the Grant Committee.

- e. **Awarding and Funding of Strategic Grants.** Strategic grant applications approved by the Board will be funded as needed in accordance with the grant proposal, subject to an expiration date established as part of the approval. The approved total funding amount for each strategic grant awarded will be reserved from the general funds of the Foundation. Disbursements may occur at any time thereafter upon written request from the grant applicant. Any reserved funds that are not utilized prior to the expiration date of the grant will be returned to the general funds of the Foundation and become available for future grants. Any extension of the expiration date must be approved by the Board based on a written request, submitted by the grant sponsor before the expiration date, which includes a report on the status of the project or activity and justification for the extension.
  - f. **Reports.** For any strategic grants awarded for projects or activities not completed and fully funded within one year following the grant date, an annual report regarding the status of the project or activity, including an evaluation of progress toward its intended outcomes, must be submitted to the Grant Committee by the grant sponsor within one year following the grant date and on each anniversary thereafter. A final report evaluating the outcomes/result of the project funded by each strategic grant awarded must be submitted to the Grant Committee by the grant sponsor no later than 60 days after the funds have been fully spent or the expiration date of the grant, whichever occurs first. Any funds disbursed by the Foundation but not spent for the approved project or activity must be returned to the Foundation.
3. **Determination of Funds Available for Grants.** Not later than its February meeting each year, the Board will make a determination of the funds available for grants to be awarded during that year according to the following process:
- a. **Unrestricted Funds.** From the aggregate market value of the Foundation’s financial assets as of the prior year end, deductions will be made for a) any contributions to the Foundation that are subject to use restrictions, b) any funds reserved for disbursement under previously approved grants of all types, and c) any recorded liabilities of the Foundation. The resulting sum is the “Unrestricted Funds.”
  - b. **Sustainability Fund.** From the Unrestricted Funds, an amount equal to two times the average annual operating budget of the Church for the prior three years shall be set aside as the “Sustainability Fund.”
  - c. **Total Grant Funds Available.** The amount remaining after deducting the amount of the Sustainability Fund from the Unrestricted Funds is the “Total Grant Funds Available” for the coming year.
  - d. **Competitive Grant Pool.** Based on the Total Grant Funds Available and other considerations, the Board shall determine whether to have a Competitive Grant program for the coming year. If the Board decides to proceed with a Competitive Grant program, it shall further determine the amount to be set aside from the Total Grant Funds Available for the Competitive Grant Pool, in the manner described above.
  - e. **Strategic Grants Fund.** The amount remaining after deducting the amount set aside for the Competitive Grant Pool from the Total Grant Funds Available is the “Strategic Grants Fund” for that year. However, strategic grants approved in any

year, whether for immediate or deferred funding, shall not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the sum of the Strategic Grants Fund plus the total funds reserved but not yet disbursed for strategic grants previously awarded.

- f. **Investment of Funds.** Notwithstanding the determination of funds available for different grant categories, all financial assets of the Foundation shall be aggregated and managed as a whole, and not segregated into separate funds.

- C. **Purpose, Interpretation and Amendment of Policy.** This Grant Policy has been adopted by the Board as a guideline to the operation and administration of the Foundation's grant authority and programs. It is subject to interpretation by the Board and may be amended at any time by Board action.