



PRESS RELEASE

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UCC Church Solicits Proposals For Innovative New Ministries in South Charlotte

CHARLOTTE — On Easter Sunday 2017, Charlotte's 100-year-old Holy Covenant United Church of Christ launched a search for proposals: seeking fresh ideas for 21st-century ministry to be located in the greater south Charlotte area — started with funding from the progressive church's Pilgrim Legacy Fund and sustained over the long term by social entrepreneurship.

“The statistics for new church starts, and for churches in general, demonstrate a need for an alternative to the traditional church,” said The Rev. Dr. Nancy Ellett Allison, Senior Pastor at Holy Covenant. “Many people are looking for a way to practice their faith and build community that looks quite different from the church most of us know.”

A team of Holy Covenant members has been working for the last year to develop the proposal concept being launched on Easter Sunday, with support from consultant The Rev. Cheri Lovell. Applicants must first complete an online Initial Inquiry that outlines their concept and funding plan, with an in-depth proposal and business plan required of those invited to proceed to the next round of consideration. Holy Covenant expects to announce its first project(s) on the first Sunday of Advent 2017. Details about the proposal process are available via Holy Covenant's website at holycovenantucc.org.

Funding for this new initiative reflects an exciting opportunity in the Protestant landscape — starting new ministries for a new generation from the sale of real estate owned by churches that have closed.

In 2013, Holy Covenant merged with the Pilgrim Congregational United Church of Christ, a congregation founded in the 1960s and located on Sharon Road near the Harris YMCA. After several years of operating as two campuses, the merged church sold the Sharon Road property in December of 2016 and created an endowment, the Pilgrim Legacy Fund, with 90% of the net sale proceeds — an amount totaling roughly of \$1.5M. Per the agreement between the two churches, earnings from the endowment will fund new ministry(ies) in south Charlotte. Holy Covenant has identified the greater Fort Mill area — from south Charlotte to Rock Hill — as the preferred site for this new ministry.

“Closing Pilgrim was easier for us knowing that something new would grow from what we had planted and nourished for so many years,” said Sharon Landis, long-time member at Pilgrim who now attends Holy Covenant.

Founded in uptown Charlotte in 1916 as First Reformed Church, Holy Covenant is a member of the United Church of Christ (UCC), an historic mainline Protestant denomination that traces its roots to the Pilgrims who landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620. Holy Covenant and its members believe God continues to speak to God’s people in every generation, and continually calls them to create a just, peaceful and sustainable world. Like many UCC churches, Holy Covenant seeks to celebrate and honor the gifts of all of God’s people, regardless of gender, orientation, race or ethnicity, ability or another other arbitrary barrier. The church offers a weekly service each Sunday at 10:55am.

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