

Background

In 2005 Diocesan Convention referred a resolution to the Board of Directors seeking to alter the formula for congregational giving. The charge to the Board was to examine the “Asking” and make recommendations to Convention for any change. This included another charge from Convention that joined the examination of the “Asking” (now the “Stewardship Share”) to strategic planning for the diocese. The Board of Directors formed the *Task Force on the Asking and Strategic Planning* in response. This plan, *One Church, Many Locations* represents the second part of that charge.

The four areas of focus herein are drawn from clear themes that emerged in surveys of members of our congregations, vestries and bishop’s committees, and all clergy, conducted in 2006. The surveys asked people to consider what they valued about their local congregation, how they thought the resources of the diocese could support their congregation, what they are doing themselves in terms of ministry, and much more. The surveys asked respondents to consider all settings—from local congregations to the Diocese. Results from the surveys, in addition to other resources such as demographic information for Iowa, informed the changes to the formula and they inform this plan.

The four areas of focus, in sum, are

Shared Ministry—just distribution of resources and ministry, both materially and spiritually.

Strengthening Congregations—support for the Church in her local settings.

Next Generations of Faith—reaching populations who have not heard of God’s love for them, or who might not believe it.

Anglican/Episcopal Identity—holding up the gifts we have in our tradition.

These four areas are ones that you have offered as being of most importance and could be used in a wide variety of ways—it could be useful in focusing local budgets to what you value as well as focusing the diocesan budget. It could help congregations assess their ministries—are there some that could be let go of? Some that could be started? It could be a guide for Chapters in establishing joint ministries amongst congregations.

It is meant to be a guide, based on our collective hopes and desires, on how we might best and most wisely serve God as the Episcopal Church in Iowa. As such, also included in this document is a worksheet for local congregations, the Board of Directors, commissions, and others to use to discern, within the framework of this document, what we are currently doing well, what energizes us, and what we may strive to do in answer to our call to ministry as **One Church in many locations**.