Task Force on Funding Mission with the Marginalized

Members

The Rev. Deacon John Ray, Chair	Northeast Metro	Deacon
The Rev. Matt Babcock	North Atlanta	
Ms. Meghan Bennett	Southwest Atlanta	Deacon Postulant
Ms. Myra Blackmon	Oconee	
The Rev. Shannon Darke	Marietta	
The Ven. Carole Maddux	Marietta	Archdeacon
The Rev. Deacon Lisa Parker	Georgia Mountains	Deacon
Ms. Malinda Shamburger	Chattahoochee Valley	
The Rev. Deacon Devon Smyth	Northwest Georgia	Deacon
The Rev. Kenya Thompson	Mid-Atlanta	
Ms. Amanda Vaughn	East Atlanta	
Ms. Beth Wood	Middle Georgia	
Canon Sally Ulrey	*Bishop's Staff*	
Dr. Lindsey Hardegree	*Bishop's Staff – Extended*	

Mandate

R25-6 Task Force on Funding Mission with the Marginalized

Resolved, That the Annual Council of the Diocese of Atlanta establish a Task Force on Funding Mission with the Marginalized to design and bring to the 2026 Annual Council a proposal for a permanent Mission Start-Up Fund dedicated to launching worshiping communities among the marginalized in mission areas as defined below; and be it further

Resolved, That for the purposes of this resolution a "mission area" shall mean a geographic area that: (a) has no current Episcopal worshiping presence in the vicinity, and (b) has above-average poverty relative to the State of Georgia, indicating that a worshiping community is unlikely to form and become self-supporting without external start-up funding; and be it further

Resolved, That the Fund is intended for start-up, not ongoing operations; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force's proposal shall include a clear non-supplanting rule: Fund grants must be additive, time-limited start-up awards for distinct new worshiping communities in mission areas and may not replace diocesan support for existing diocesan missions; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force shall recommend whether to allow any time-limited transitional support and, if so, set clear parameters for duration, tapering, and guardrails against indefinite underwriting; and be it further

Resolved, That the Mission Start-Up Fund, once created, shall not be used to support existing diocesan missions such as Church of the Common Ground, Emmaus House, or Church of the Holy Comforter, but shall be focused on new mission starts throughout the Diocese, including and beyond Metro Atlanta; and be it further

Resolved, That in developing eligibility and evaluation criteria, the Task Force shall expressly encourage proposals from smaller parishes that are rich in enthusiasm and volunteers yet constrained financially, so that parish-led mission initiatives have a clear pathway to apply for start-up support; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force's proposal shall include a funding mechanism designed to raise approximately $200,000 per year for the Mission Start-Up Fund, beginning in 2027; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force shall propose the Fund's structure, governance and board composition, eligibility and evaluation criteria, grant terms and duration appropriate to start-up funding, administration, and reporting practices, including how the Fund may accept and steward donations and bequests; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force shall be composed of one representative from each of the eleven convocations, all to be approved by the Bishop, and shall include a minimum of two deacons.

Summary of Work

Following adoption of Resolution 25-6 at the 119th Annual Council, the work of the Task Force on Funding Mission with the Marginalized during 2026 was divided into three main categories: Governance, Mission Criteria, and Finance.

From a governance perspective, the consensus of the Task Force was to avoid setting up any new structure if possible. We coalesced around the idea of a forming the fund under the auspices of the Episcopal Community Foundation for Middle and North Georgia (ECF). ECF has existing governance and expertise in mission evaluation that this Mission Start-Up Fund could utilize.

ECF's Board of Directors has been informed of this consensus of the Task Force and is amenable to incorporating such a fund into its structure.

For mission criteria, the Task Force affirms the aims of the original resolution 25-6, that the focus of the Mission Start-Up Fund would be to new mission in areas that have no current Episcopal worshiping presence in the vicinity and possess above-average poverty relative to the State of Georgia. This geography could be defined as small as a prison to as large as a county, if those entities met these two criteria.

The Task Force affirms that this Mission Start-Up Fund would not be available for traditional church plants or existing parish mission initiatives.

In terms of finance—raising seed money for the fund—the Task Force considered several different options. What we determined was that funders whose giving interest involves new mission to the marginalized should be approached to provide seed funding. Funding would build upon funds held by the diocese that restricted to new mission, and additional funders could be individuals, parishes, endowments or foundations, or bequests.

The Task Force came to a consensus that the details of such a fundraising effort need to be further defined and then pursued during the remainder of 2026 and into 2027. Once adequate funding is in place, the Task Force can present a resolution to Council in 2027 that seeks establishment of this Mission Start-Up Fund.

Proposed Resolutions

Extend the Commitment of the Task Force on Funding Mission with the Marginalized

Resolved, that the 120th Annual Council of the Diocese of Atlanta extend the commitment made at the 119th Annual Council to create a "Task Force on Funding Mission with the Marginalized," composed of one representative from each of the eleven convocations with a minimum of two deacons, all approved by the Bishop, to design a proposal for a permanent

Mission Start-Up Fund dedicated to launching worshiping communities among the marginalized in mission areas; and be it further

Resolved, that the 120th Annual Council receive and accept the report of the Task Force; and be it further

Resolved, that the 120th Annual Council extend the work of the Task Force to submit its proposal to the 121st Annual Council in 2027.