



## The Bishop Peter J. Lee Endowment for Small Church Revitalization Grant Fund

### Guidelines for 2026

#### Background and Eligibility

The Peter J. Lee Small Church Revitalization Fund is an endowment founded in 2001 and to be eligible, a church must have an average Sunday attendance of less than 200 persons. Grants will be awarded to assist small churches in their revitalization, preservation, expansion, and, where appropriate, merger and closing. Congregations are encouraged to consider projects that are both programmatic and physical in nature.

The intent of these grants is to motivate small churches to gather internal resources to meet their ministry needs. ***Small Church Revitalization grants are made on a one-to-one matching basis only.***

#### What kind of projects does the Small Church Revitalization Grants fund?

Small Church Revitalization grants support small churches (ASA of less than 200) that have a commitment to growth and community service. Grants may be made to help churches physically – by encouraging efforts to expand their structures; spiritually – by encouraging efforts to expand or increase worship programs; and financially – by encouraging parishioners to accept that they have an abundance of resources within their parish.

#### Application Process

Applicants for Small Church Revitalization grants must have all the following reports submitted to the Diocese.

- Record of Audits
- Record of Parochial Reports
- Record of Financial Support

- Churches are required to have a record of financial support to the Diocese of Virginia. This is defined as a three-year history of material gifts demonstrating an intentional financial commitment to the Diocese. Churches should have turned in a pledge card and have fulfilled or be working to fulfill their pledge. This determination will be made at the discretion of the Executive Board.



- Record of audits is defined as a three-year history of submitted audits. Since audits are due August 31 of the current grant year then the three previous years' audits are required. For example, if the grant year is 2026, then audits must be submitted for 2025, 2024 and 2023.
- Record of parochial reports is defined as a three-year history of submitted reports. Since parochial reports are due in early March of the current grant year, the current year and the two previous years' reports are required. For example, if the grant year is 2026, then the parochial reports must be submitted for 2025, 2024 and 2023.

## Grant Process and Timetable

Applicants may apply for only ONE diocesan grant per year – either a *Bishop's Appeal Grant* or *Peter James Lee Small Church Revitalization Grant*. Successful grant applicants should expect to receive award checks by early summer, and grant activities should be completed, and monies expended within 12 months of grant receipt. Final reports – including narrative and financial information – are required at the end of the grant cycle. Current grantees must wait one year before applying for any additional grants. In other words, if you received a grant in 2025, you cannot apply for another grant until 2026.

## The Grant Application Process

### Step 1: One-page Letter of Inquiry

Describe your project, who will benefit, who will be involved in implementing the project, how much it will cost overall, include the amount of funds you have on hand for the project, and how much you anticipate requesting as a grant.

Please be sure to include contact information for clergy, senior warden, and anyone else managing the project. If your church is currently without permanent clergy, please include the contact information for senior warden and treasurer.

**Deadline: February 13, 2026**

**Email to:** [giving@episcopalvirginia.org](mailto:giving@episcopalvirginia.org)

Within a week of receipt of your letter of inquiry, you'll be notified if your idea falls generally within the program's guidelines and whether you may submit a full proposal. **Do not** submit a full proposal unless you have been invited to do so.



## Step 2: The Full Proposal

**Deadline:** Must be received by email no later than **March 13, 2026.**

### **The Elements of a Full Proposal**

1. Official application cover sheet. Note: cover sheets must be signed by the rector/vicar/priest-in-charge and senior warden, unless the congregation does not have permanent clergy. *An email stating 'signature approval' will also be accepted in lieu of a signature on the form.*

2. The proposal asks for a **1,000 word narrative** covering the following topics:

- Description of project (what are your goals and what will you do to achieve those goals?)
- What problem or need will your project address?
- Who will direct the project and who carry out the project activities?
- How does the church demonstrate its support for the project?
- How will you evaluate the project's success? If applicable, how will the project be continued after grant funding is expended?
- How will the project benefit your organization and the Diocese?

3. Project Budget (presented on separate pages from the narrative)

a. Project Expenses

b. Project Revenues

- Include services and equipment that you expect to be donated
- financial support from your church
- individuals and businesses, and
- foundations, if applicable
- Indicate which funding has been received, which has been promised, but not yet paid, and which funding has only been applied for.

4. Project Timetable

5. Required reports as described on page 1.

*A word about other attachments: Photographs and other illustrative materials may be included but might not be distributed with the proposal materials provided to members of the grant committee. Be sure to tell your story and make your case in the narrative section. Materials sent with grant proposals will not be returned.*



## Size of Grant Awards

Grant sizes may be awarded up to \$5,000, but all grants must be matched dollar-for-dollar from the requesting church.

## Activities or Budget Line Items *NOT* Typically Funded

- Annual operating support
- Support for mature programs
- Financial support for specific individuals, rather than programs
- Loans
- Building repair and maintenance that would normally be considered “routine”
- Multi-year requests
- Travel expenses for individuals participating in mission trips
- Requests from churches intending simply to redistribute grant money to other organizations or individuals (pass-through grants; re-granting)
- Sponsorships of festivals or one-time events that are organized and offered by other organizations
- Salaries

If you are in doubt about the eligibility of a contemplated expense, please ask before including it in your final proposal project budget.