

Annual Bishop's Appeal

In Matthew chapter 4, Jesus says to his beloved community of disciples, “Come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people.” Jesus continues to call us to come, be transformed and then go out to invest in people. Thank you for your support of transformational mission and ministry in and through the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester! Your support by your presence, your talents, your time, and your financial gifts, helps us sustain our positive presence in and through fifty worshipping communities in the eight counties that make up our Diocese. We are a welcoming church that takes all other-oriented mission seriously because of you! Mission that transforms lives is why we exist.

Over thirty years ago, in 1987, to be precise, Jim and Sue Adams studied their neighborhood in Geneva NY and decided that children who live in poverty need a safe space to do their homework while learning about God, kindness and generosity from their neighbors. They started Neighbors Night. This mission has blessed the lives of countless volunteers who have helped run it and thousands of children who are growing up to be productive adults. Sue was and is a devoted Episcopalian lay leader. Jim was and is a committed Episcopal Priest. Both of them continue to raise and form good leaders. They are among the many examples of good leaders making a positive difference in our region. Good leaders make mission happen.

Over the years we have reduced the asking rate of Congregational Apportionments for two reasons. One, to make room for more local discernment of and funding for mission. Two, to keep our common pot sustained with enough financial resources to support those among us who are most financially vulnerable to be a viable church where they are planted. Right now, nearly all the apportionment that you contribute to the Diocese goes out to support mission and ministry locally, nationally and globally. In all honesty, all of our budget, including the services of the Bishop’s office, is in missional service for the glory of God. Without this clarity, Church as an institution is not worth sustaining.

Without raising our apportionments, I am asking for your prayers. Will you pray for our capacity to raise and sustain new and good leaders by voluntarily supporting the following leadership development opportunities in our Diocese? Your donation to the Bishop's Appeal will help us:

1. Increase seminarian scholarships to raise up clergy from various underrepresented groups to keep increasing the diversity of our Diocesan clergy.
2. Grow Christian Formation and leadership development programs for Children, Youth and Young Adults by reducing the cost for young people to participate in Rise Camp, ROC the Diocese, while also training young leaders for this and the next generation.
3. Nurture diocesan Deaf Ministry and Deaf Campus Ministry at NTID/RIT. Rochester is known as the Deaf friendly city in the country. Your support will help us sustain our Diocesan Missioner for Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Rochester has the largest deaf population, per capita, across the country. Many from this community have graduated from college with post baccalaureate degrees. Approximately *43K persons*, total, which is 3.7% of the city's residents live productive lives here. 19,500 deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals under the age of 65 live in the Rochester area, which means that almost half of them are quite young (American Community Survey, conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2012).

4. Finally, your support of my Bishop's Appeal will help us expand the College for Congregational Development by making it less expensive while also making it more accessible for congregations that cannot partake of it in its current offering formats.

After ten years of serving among you, I feel raising up and sustaining the development of good Christian leaders is a worthwhile investment. To simplify things, we are rolling the Bishop's Discretionary Fund into the Bishop's Appeal. I consider it a privilege to serve as your Bishop, and as one among you following Jesus in this challenging season. However small or large your gift may be, I would like to count on your prayers as we launch this Bishop's appeal. Thank you for your faithfulness and for your prayerful partnership and trust in this important investment to fish for people by raising up and sustaining a new generation of leaders.

God Bless you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. L. S.', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.