

VanderKamp Sale Proceeds Proposal

May 11, 2021

Committee: Pastor Robert Langston (Onondaga Hill Presbyterian Church)
Jill Kilts (Whitelaw Presbyterian Church)
Pastor Mary Anderson (Formerly at First Presbyterian Church of Weedsport)
Sarah Buckshot (Cayuga-Syracuse Presbytery Staff & OHPC Youth Educator)

The committee (noted above) under the guidance of Resource Presbyter Karen Chamis met recently to discuss the use of proceeds from the sale of VanderKamp. The committee was appointed by Presbytery Moderator Stephanie Weaver. Stephanie was asked to pull this team together and reviewed the makeup of the team before discussions began. The group was asked to “dream big” and bring a proposal to the Presbytery on ways to invest the proceeds into youth projects in the Presbytery.

As we do not know the final amount of funds available, we’ve structured this proposal with percentages.

Our group kept the values of VanderKamp in mind during our discussions:

- serving God,
- youth development,
- worship,
- mission work,
- peace and justice,
- leadership training,
- environmental education and activism

Grants for Congregations

Percentage: 40%

Disbursement: The Committee would disburse approximately 10K each year to congregations (the balance to be invested in a fund)

Purpose: Focused on youth and intergenerational programs for use within churches and the larger community.

Examples:

- Support for Triennium, conferences, retreats for youth groups or individuals
- Intergenerational programming
- Mission Trips for all ages
- Sunday School, Teen group and Confirmation activities
- Vacation Bible School programming
- Community gardens/green spaces
- Outdoor Education programs
- Projects that focus on supporting community youth

Legacy Project

Percentage: 33%

Disbursement: The committee desires one year to develop a proposal for a legacy project, with a deadline of May 2022 to present for Presbytery approval.

Purpose: Creation of a legacy project that will benefit youth and others in our communities

Examples: Ropes course (leadership training for all ages, Community Garden, etc.

Presbytery Youth Day

Percentage: 14%

Disbursement: Funds would be used for an annual youth event (balance to be held in investments)

Purpose: An annual Presbytery-wide Youth day would feature fellowship, worship, joint mission projects throughout the Presbytery. The location of the event would change to better involve youth throughout the entire Presbytery (Syracuse, Auburn, the former VanderKamp, Cazenovia-area, etc.). This even would be coordinated by the Presbytery Youth Council (PYC).

Youth Wild Card

Percentage: 3%

Disbursement: Approximately 1K of funds would be used to for youth directed projects (balance to be held in investments). The group making this decision will be the PYC.

Purpose: This provides both an opportunity to engage in Mission as well as leadership development of youth.

Examples: Development of little free food pantries; support of teens who are refugees; group activity for Presbytery youth, etc.

Presbytery Support

Percentage: 10% tithe

Questions/Responses

- 1) My church only has one youth – aren't we at a disadvantage?

The congregational grants can be used to help any number of youth in your congregation find connection with youth throughout the Presbytery (and denomination) by offering funding for participation in the Presbyterian Youth Triennium (2022!) as well as other camp and conferences. The Presbytery Youth Day is a great way for churches with no youth group to send their young folks (and friends!) to a Presbytery-wide experience to connect with other youth. The PYC is another opportunity for youth from small churches and those without youth groups to participate with other Presbyterian Youth.

- 2) We have no youth in our congregation, how might these funds help the youth in the larger community?

There are a number of great ideas on how a church with no youth can support youth within the greater community! One example is a congregation that holds an annual awards banquet for students recommended by the local High School who aren't star athletes, academics or arts youth, but are leaders in ways that resonate with the Gospel. Another example is a congregation that partners with a local Refugee Resettlement agency to provide support specifically for youth.

- 3) VanderKamp was so much more than youth. Where is that reflected in this proposal?

The Congregational grants can be used for a variety of projects that reflect the values of VanderKamp – including intergenerational programming, outdoor education programs and community garden spaces.

- 4) Why isn't the money just being distributed to the churches?

Several years ago the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse distributed funds from the sale of one of its member churches throughout the Presbytery to be used for mission as a way of reflecting the understanding that churches are on the front lines of mission. The proposal this time is to use these funds in a way that support the work of our congregations by providing opportunities for networking and collaboration, with an emphasis on youth. Many of our congregations are in a catch-22 situation – it's difficult to develop congregational youth programming with a limited number of young folks. By re-embracing a network approach, we provide all of our churches with opportunities for young folks to be involved – regardless of number.

- 5) Shouldn't this money be used to support the work of the Presbytery as a whole?

Currently our financial situation as a Presbytery is non-sustainable. Although using these funds would allow us more time to consider solutions (Shared Leadership with other Presbyteries, etc.) it also removes the urgency to tackle this challenge.

- 6) Why aren't you spending all the money at once?/Why are you spending down the money so fast?

There have been several questions about the rate of spending the funds. This proposal seeks to provide both short-term and long-term opportunities. We're not advocating the development of a true endowment fund (with only interest to be utilized) because there is an urgency in many of our congregations for this type of networking. If programs like the annual Presbytery Day have value for our churches, we trust additional funding will be made available.