



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

### Q: What do we hope to accomplish with the Epiphany initiative?

#### We hope to encourage:

- Conviction and compassion leading to action
- Entrepreneurial proposals that reflect the values of love, community, transformation, and servant leadership
- Engagement in socially-minded, city-focused initiatives which empower individuals, promote renewal, and point to the transformational work of Jesus
- Hunger to see lasting impact at scale
- Innovative ideas that compel church-wide action and involvement
- A deep desire to embody the Gospel in work and every other life context, reflecting biblical stewardship of our time, talent, resources, and relationships
- Renewal of individual hearts, as well as systems, industries, and neighborhoods: the work of our hands every day
- Extravagant and joyful giving

### Q: How will we measure the success of Epiphany?

#### Success for Epiphany will be to accomplish values articulated in our Long Range Strategic Plan:

- **Launching great ideas as social ventures** and having a direct impact on our community in ways FPC would not otherwise have imagined; new ways of lifting up the lowly, feeding the hungry, reconciling people, and sharing love
- **Exponentially broader reach** to our vulnerable neighbors
- **Creation of new opportunities** for FPC to serve Christ and build community
- **Deeper faith engagement for our community**, connecting weekday work and worship in new and creative ways
- **Identification and development of leaders** within the congregation
- **An entrepreneurial church culture** where people consider risk-taking for the Gospel to be important and valuable
- **Church orientation outside our own walls:** deepening understanding of what it means to participate in God's mission, *being* the church, rather than simply *attending* church

- **Hospitality** from our congregation to all individuals who seek a spiritual home
- **Expanded partnerships with** civic, commercial, religious, and secular organizations that expand our capacity to show the love of Christ in the city.

### **Q: How will the Epiphany process work?**

The distinguishing characteristic of Epiphany is the unique organization of the process from start to end, based on task-oriented, time-bound, laity-led sub-teams. The success of this process depends on the time and commitment of sub-teams made up of FPC members. Each sub-team will have two co-leaders who will be responsible for organizing the sub-team, setting appropriate dates and milestones, defining deliverables and outputs, and submitting their plans to the Epiphany Steering Group for endorsement and approval. The sub-teams of FPC members are described below in general order of their chronological role in the process of incubating and launching a social venture:

1. **Prayer:** Praying regularly for our city and world, for the social entrepreneurs who submit applications, and for wisdom in discernment for all involved in the Epiphany initiative
2. **Publicity:** Promoting the competition among social entrepreneurs for the sake of inviting and receiving proposals
3. **Screeners:** Reading initial social venture proposals and identifying a pool of semi-finalists
4. **Navigators:** Mentoring and coaching individual applicants through the incubation process; navigators will participate with semi-finalists at an "Immersion Day" workshop
5. **Navigator Trainers:** Training navigators about available resources and the process for selecting candidates
6. **Judges:** Reviewing semi-finalist proposals, hearing final pitches, and selecting finalists
7. **Skills Coaches:** Coaching semi-finalists on specific topics, bringing expertise in areas related to entrepreneurship and business planning, project development, mission and business, etc.
8. **Immersion Day:** Planning and designing the "Immersion Day" event with skills coaches from the congregation
9. **Incubators:** Planning and designing the long-term engagement model with FPC for winners through specialized seminars, workshops, networking and personalized coaching, etc.; assisting social entrepreneurs in building relationship connections at FPC and guiding them toward successful launch of social ventures

### **Q: When will Epiphany happen?**

**Late August 2018:** Announce the project to the congregation, and recruit mentors, coaches, screeners, and judges from FPC membership; build enthusiasm and buy-in. Members will hear about Epiphany multiple times and in varied ways so they can understand, get involved in, and be excited about this initiative.

**August-October:** Mobilize the *entire* congregation in pursuit of publicity to attract applicants. Even if members don't serve in an official capacity, we will invite them to reach out to neighbors,

extended family, co-workers, college students and their network of connections to generate interest among social entrepreneurs.

**Early October:** Applications due. Using the fall for the intensive part of the program ensures that the congregation is engaged when fewer members are traveling.

**Late October 2018-January 2019:** Invest in the finalists and deeply engage the congregation in the work of incubating social ventures.

**February:** Final pitches and judging. **Reveal Sunday (02/24/19)**

**February and beyond:** Develop the long-term relationship objectives of all launched ideas! (Where the really hard work begins!)

**Q: What kinds of ideas are we looking for?**

We are looking for ideas that reflect our conviction that the Gospel calls us to a life of tangible compassion. Successful ideas will further the values of love, community, transformation, and servant leadership. We want to invest in entrepreneurs who seek to use their ideas to transform our community and the world and whose ventures will be brought to life through the sharing of resources, knowledge, experience, and gifts from our own congregation.

**Q: Do applicants have to be Christian?**

Epiphany is an initiative of First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta, created to live our call to participate in God's mission in and for the world. While adherence to the Christian faith is not required for an applicant's proposal to be considered, proposals should further the Christian values of love, community, transformation, and servant leadership. Such ideas will pursue authentic diversity, offer radical hospitality, provide mutual care, seek restorative relationships, reflect bold humility, model just generosity, and reflect a commitment to missional living.

**Q: Does this mean that we will stop supporting our current mission partners and community ministries efforts?**

**No.** The Epiphany project will not replace any of FPC's existing partnerships or commitments. It is born of the belief that God calls us to new ways of participating in mission and reaching outside our own walls into the community. It is also born of the belief that our congregation has gifts and resources that have not yet been shared with the world and that we can have an even greater impact in our community by empowering social entrepreneurs who need our gifts and resources in order to effect change.

**Q: How many ideas are we going to fund?**

Relying on the generosity of our congregation and using other revenue wisely, we hope to award a total of \$250,000 in 2019. The number of ideas we incubate and ventures we help to launch will depend on the applications we receive and what resources they require. The Judging team will develop objective criteria and will have full discretion as to how many ventures to launch and how to allocate the money.

**Q: Are there award minimums and maximums?**

There are no set parameters for how much the judges may award to one individual or project. However, the judges will select multiple "semi-finalists" who will be mentored. From that pool of projects, finalists will be chosen to receive award money.

**Q: What happens to people who don't get funded?**

They will still have access to our mentorship, skills coaches, and navigating teams. While we will not be able to fund all the applications we receive, we hope the sharing of other kinds of gifts will help even those entrepreneurs whose projects are not funded bring their ideas to fruition.

**Q: Will we only allow ideas that impact the city/area/region of Atlanta?**

Not necessarily, but we will require that applicants reside in the Atlanta area so that they can fully participate in the incubation process.

**Q: Is there an age requirement or limit for applicants?**

No. Our Screeners will consider applicants even if they have limited entrepreneurial experience.

**Q: What are the benefits to an individual whose idea is accepted into this incubator?**

Beyond the possibility of grant money, there are other benefits from participating in the **Epiphany** process—benefits we believe can be even more compelling than award money.

Prospective entrepreneurs will:

1. Undergo a rigorous process and receive constructive feedback on a project or venture they have wanted to pursue but for which funding/assistance/technical know-how have been unavailable. The process of applying for the Epiphany project will force social entrepreneurs to hone their ideas and strengthen their plans.
2. Receive hands-on coaching from a team of mentors with a wealth of successful experience in a variety of business and entrepreneurial endeavors. Develop and improve a venture idea for judging by a panel of experts.
3. Gain experience and feedback on how to pitch and communicate a venture, not just for the sake of Epiphany, but for other future opportunities as well.
4. As a semi-finalist, participate in a one-day workshop with marketplace and city leaders as well as other semi-finalists to build relationships, receive encouragement and further refine ideas, then "pitch" their venture to a panel of judges.
5. As a Finalist, present their winning idea to our Judging Team and the FPC congregation, and if selected, receive further consulting, financial and business planning assistance, and funding awards.
6. Receive advanced mentoring on topics critical to organizational development.
7. Develop relationships with an ongoing group of advocates and connectors ready to help ideas and new businesses thrive beyond the program.

**Q: It seems like the basis for getting through the screening process is "idea focused." What about the individual? How do we distinguish between the idea and the person with the idea? Will there be criteria applied to accepting individuals?**

There are three layers of vetting:

1. Initial Screening Process: this will be a systematized, efficient review of submitted ideas and proposals by a team of screeners dedicated to developing a healthy pool of screened ideas that fit our high-level criteria:

- Is the idea compelling?
- Is the idea feasible?
- Is the idea a "fit" with FPC? Does it further the values that are our foundations?

2. Once the initial proposals are objectively reviewed according to those criteria, the accepted screened pool will move on to the Navigation team: one-on-one mentors who will be matched with each accepted idea. The Navigators will meet with all applicants and select "**Semi-finalists.**" This layer of screening will involve the "person" more than the "idea" and will require Navigators to select the social entrepreneur and corresponding idea that are best matched with their passions and skills. Navigators will be trained in what to look for in an idea, what questions to ask in interviews with social entrepreneurs, and more, enabling them to make decisions that reflect not only their preference towards working with someone new, but also a well-thought-out list of qualities to look for to evaluate the likelihood for success.

3. The final layer of vetting involves the Judges, who hear the pitches and award the funding to "**Finalists.**" The judges can ask questions related to the proposal and idea as well as the ways in which the individual plans to live out foundational values in running the venture, etc.

**Q: Does First Presbyterian Church want to own any of these ideas or future organizations?**

No. First Presbyterian Church is interested in accountability but not ownership. Our desire is to serve our city and world, through the power of encouraging social entrepreneurs who want to share love, build community, seek transformation, and model servant leadership.

**Q: Are applicants required to become FPC members in order to be funded?**

No. Epiphany is a new way to model radical hospitality and reach beyond our walls to share Good News with the world. Anyone who seeks a spiritual home is welcome in the FPC community.

**Q: What is the long-term support model for finalists after funding is awarded? How do we ensure we are truly being stewards of the money, effort, ideas and individuals that are brought into the process?**

Determining the appropriate support model and engagement with the selected finalists who receive funding will be one of the formal jobs of the "Incubator" team. It is not enough to simply help launch the ideas. We want to prepare social entrepreneurs for long-term success. This does not mean that FPC would commit any financial resources beyond an Epiphany grant to a finalist, but we will endeavor to provide a solid foundation and abiding relationships that will enable our finalists' ventures to flourish. Specific answers to this question will depend on the entrepreneur and social venture and will be developed through the incubation process.

**Q: How will the prize money be awarded?**

We anticipate awarding prize money in grant form. If a social venture calls for another type of award, that will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**Q: Do we distinguish between non-profit and for-profit ideas?**

We want to encourage all ideas. We expect that most applications will present ideas that have not been incorporated and are not the property of any legal entity. Our skills coaches, judges, and incubators will help evaluate and give proper guidance as to the most desirable vehicle for an individual idea. However, both non-profit and for-profit ideas will be considered.

**Q: Who designed this process? Do we have any support from someone else who has done this?**

Epiphany is based on a process designed and successfully carried out by Colonial Church in Edina, Minnesota. Their initiative is called "Innové" and led their Mission Pastor to start a non-profit in order to guide churches into new ways of participating in God's mission. After two rounds of applications (giving \$250,000 per round (\$500k+ total) over the course of five years), Colonial Church has used this framework to successfully launch eleven social ventures, ALL of which are still operating and bettering their community. First Presbyterian Church of Houston, TX successfully adapted Innové and created a similar approach to reinvigorate their community ministry, which they called "Project Flourish." Our Session voted to engage Rev. Brian Jones of Innové to act as a consultant for FPC as we seek to answer God's call to do something new and create a social entrepreneurship initiative. Leadership at FPC Houston/Project Flourish has also provided information and partnership to help us successfully launch Epiphany here at FPC Atlanta. For more information, please see [www.innoveproject.org](http://www.innoveproject.org).

**Q: Is this a one time, year-long event?**

Our formal process will begin in August 2018 and our first social ventures will be launched in early 2019. While that is our initial commitment, our prayer is that this will be the start of a new way of engaging in God's mission as a congregation, and that, by the Holy Spirit's leading, we will generate the interest, desire, results and passion to lead to successive rounds of seeking, incubating, and launching innovative ideas to solve the challenging issues faced in our community and our world.