

The Isaiah Project (revised in July 2022)

*“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?
Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?”*

At its May 2022 meeting, the vestry of All Souls Episcopal Parish voted unanimously to commit a tithe — 10 percent — of the Living Waters Capital Campaign towards a community impact project or projects. Guided and inspired by the words of Isaiah 58, the clergy and vestry will implement the Isaiah Project, a group of parishioners who will look at several elements of this tithe and develop recommendations to the vestry.

The Isaiah Project workgroup will develop a list of potential target areas — like Native American reparations, support for foster youth, mental health initiatives, as examples — for the congregation and the vestry to consider. From a broad list, the workgroup will narrow it down to a group of three or four target areas. The next efforts of the group will be to consider projects or programs within these areas that would be funded out of the tithe. These projects may come from a formal request for proposals or through parishioner/vestry/clergy referrals. Some of the considerations of the workgroup for inclusion in the Isaiah Project funding include:

- **Leverage:** Will All Souls’ tithe enable the program to leverage matching funds from governmental agencies, foundations or other sources that extend the tithe?
- **Direct service:** Although this will be discussed in the workgroup, the predilection will be for programs that provide direct service to our neighbors, rather than advocacy or broader policy work.
- **Opportunities for discernment/education:** The intention would be that collaboration with these programs will open up educational opportunities for All Souls’ parishioners.
- **Service opportunities:** In addition to education, the programs should offer All Souls’ members the opportunity for collaborative service, both during the term of the tithe and ongoing after the tithe.

Other issues that the Isaiah Project will need to consider will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Will the tithe constitute the first 10 percent that is given to the campaign, or will it be allocated as 10 percent of the funds received during a particular year? That is, will the funds be available at one single point or allocated over a three year period?
- Will the funded programs be new initiatives for, and new relationships with, All Souls, or could they include programs that are already underway with All Souls?

- Given the nature of the funds, will the projects all be one-time in nature (i.e., for capital, an acquisition or equipment)? Or, would it be possible to use the funds for an endowment or term endowment which would provide ongoing operating funds?
- Are there opportunities for All Souls parishioners to create connections with the project recipients to further strengthen the bonds with the project?
- Will the tithe enable a group to complete a project or will the tithe be one component of a larger initiative?

The Project will be a time-bound effort with the goal of offering recommendations to the vestry by the December meeting. Thank you for your prayerful discernment and collaboration in this important part of the Living Waters Capital Campaign.

*Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins
And will raise up the age-old foundations;
You will be called Repairer of Broken Wells,
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.*