

FTE Awards Grants to Initiatives Supporting Young Leaders for Church and Society

ATLANTA, July 18, 2012 — [The Fund for Theological Education \(FTE\)](#) has awarded \$88,000 in grants to four church-related organizations supporting the vocational discernment of young adults in their communities and networks.

These four organizations have joined an ecumenical [Calling Congregations](#) partnership designed by FTE to implement a discernment process known as [VocationCARE](#). VocationCARE is a blend of a social process with spiritual practices of discernment that help congregations and church-related organizations become places where vocation is nurtured, especially the vocation and leadership of young adults.

The initiatives will notice and nurture young adults as the next generation of leaders in the church and in society. Building capacity for the VocationCARE practices with diverse racial, ethnic and denominational affiliations, these grants will particularly address their potential to create social and spiritual resources among young adults for the church of the future.

“Each of the grant recipients have created places where the active imagination of young adults about the church of the future, and their role in it, is alive in compelling ways,” said James Goodmann, Director of Congregational Grants at FTE. “The leadership for each initiative will build onto their existing programs and their own strong network of relationships. We look forward to our continued partnership with these church innovators.”

The grants will support each initiative over a period of 18 months and will provide time for the recipients to implement the VocationCARE practices in ways that address the inequality around vocation that exists for many young people of color and young people in lower income neighborhoods, while also celebrating the culture, theology and wisdom of churches and their surrounding communities.

The four new grant recipients include:

[Embrace Richmond \(Richmond, VA\)](#) - Embrace Richmond’s mission is to strengthen communities by developing, coaching, and supporting community and congregational leaders who desire to be agents of change in their neighborhoods. Their current initiative for sustainable community change is helping young leaders move away from relief based approaches of serving into more relationally centered communities of practice. The VocationCARE practices help to spark the creative imagination of young adults and nurture their sense of call as it relates to the common

good of their neighborhood. Encouraged by inter-generational conversation and practice, these young adults will use their individual gifts, talents and abilities by serving in the north side of Richmond, specifically the communities bordering the Brookland Park Corridor. Embrace Richmond's communities of practice include representatives from United Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, African-American Pentecostal, Episcopal and Non-denominational congregations as well as Roman Catholic lay contemplatives.

[Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation \(Indianapolis, IN\)](#) - A denomination-wide program that works through two Disciples of Christ seminaries and the Memphis Theological Seminary to identify primarily young seminarians of color as leaders of new congregations and church plants where VocationCARE practices are part of their development. Hope is a fairly new approach to leadership and missional development that focuses on being “a church of disciples instead of a church of members.” Hope relies on VocationCARE practices to guide the journey of leadership development. This process will involve two years of coaching and forming cohort groups for leaders of new or renewed congregations that are providing places where young leaders are given the opportunity to imagine the church in new ways. The cohorts and coaching accompaniment will be for seminarians with spaces created for them to imagine and experience church in new, transformative ways. This initiative will occur in a denominational context where 740 new churches are worshipping in 14 different languages.

[Latino Leadership Circle \(LLC\) \(New York, NY\)](#) - Latino Leadership Circle is a cohort of seminary-trained ministers, church planters, marketplace leaders and youth ministers dedicated to facilitating theological reflection, education and social justice advocacy. Originally designed as a support network for emerging ministers, LLC has since become more committed to leadership development through its annual ACTS Youth Leadership Training Program, which provides training to emerging young adult leaders at a regional level. ACTS will integrate the VocationCARE practices over 13 weeks, with specific emphasis on creating safe spaces for ministry and outreach along with asking self-awakening questions. The program will also cultivate LLC alumni as mentors for young adults.

[Life Together/Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts \(Boston, MA\)](#) - Life Together's mission is to raise a generation of prayerful and prophetic young adult leaders for the church and the world. Life Together considers itself a new kind of church planter, creating communal spaces for Christian leaders to learn how to be the transformative church. Since its founding

year, one-third of their fellowship recipients have become candidates for ordination while the rest become leaders in non-profit organizations, missions and academia. The four elements of this program include intentional community, justice-based internships with praxis-based servant leadership and community organizing training (through the [Leadership Development Initiative](#)), contemplative practice and mentoring support. The VocationCARE practices will support intentional community life. Second-year fellows will be trained in these practices as they engage the Greater Boston partner site organizations, including congregations, nonprofit service providers and community groups. Partnerships include working class and low-income neighborhood youth as well as university students at Harvard and MIT.

An additional round of grants specifically for pastoral internships will be awarded in December 2012 with letters of intent due by **September 1, 2012**. For more information about grants to congregations and church-related organizations, visit www.fteleaders.org/calling or [view our site map](#) to see what previous grant recipients are doing.

Calling Congregations seeks to establish a national network of congregational and church-related partners committed to the cause of raising future pastoral leaders. It offers regional workshops, a national conference, teaching tools, Web-based resources and other support.

The Fund for Theological Education is a national, ecumenical organization dedicated to supporting a new generation of talented, diverse Christian leaders who renew the church and change the world through vocations in pastoral ministry and theological education. For more information, visit www.fteleaders.org.

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