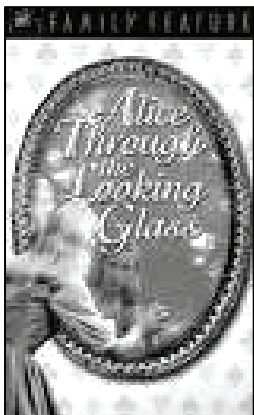


When our church gives to Albany Presbytery's Mission
we make things happen!

Through the Looking Glass



In 2006 Albany Presbytery set aside \$42,000 in the Presbytery's Mission Budget to encourage congregations and Presbytery committees to apply for funds for special projects and new initiatives. Applications are submitted to the Presbytery Council, and grants are awarded for projects which meet the Presbytery's goals and seek to enhance and support the ministries of several congregations, with the potential of effecting change throughout the whole Presbytery.

A five church coalition (Loudonville, Malta, Menands, Mechanicville and Stillwater) has been awarded a grant of \$10,000 for their project, "**Through the Looking Glass.**" As they wrote in their application,

"One of the aspects of mainline Christendom is the tendency to work alone. This characteristic needs to be challenged if we are to survive in a rapidly changing world. WE need to share ideas that work in one congregation with others. For some reason there is great resistance to listening to each other. Both clergy and congregations tend to work as "lone rangers" in their communities. This pilot project will develop a vehicle for churches to work together.

As Paul wrote in I Corinthians 13, "Now we see in a mirror dimly." It is seeing in reflections that they are working toward. There is more than one reflection of the church, more than one mental model, or set of norms which are possible.

The five churches are creating teams of 3-5 people who will meet together for leadership training, and will learn a common vocabulary and develop discernment in areas such as leadership vs. management, systemic thinking, mental models, dialogue vs. discussion and strength vs. deficit based foci. Then trips will be taken to other church sites so that these same leaders experience the culture and mental models of other congregations.

Out of that creative tension will come new dreams and practical applications to transform our own congregations.

The anticipated outcomes of this project will be practical and far-reaching.

All the equipment that will be purchased for the project will be available to other churches in Albany Presbytery after the project is completed. This includes

A projector and screen
A laptop computer
Applicable software
Books on Appreciative Inquiry and Transformation

The five church coalition will report to the Presbytery at the conclusion of their project, and will reflect on what they have learned, and how they have applied it.

They will also put together a core team of people who will then be available to other churches in the Presbytery who are interested in the possibility of duplicating their process, and discovering for themselves the practical benefits of this project.

Our support of Albany Presbytery's mission makes it possible for small, struggling churches to take risks, be creative, and look for new ways to transform and revitalize their life together. Every project that is funded through the New Initiatives line in the Mission Budget has the potential of coming back to you in the form of training, support, consultations, and fresh ideas for your own ministry.

Thank you!