

## OPERATION UNDERSTANDING: 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

The Operation Understanding Committee is our diocesan commitment to provide grant funding either to promote creating a new outreach ministry or for helping an existing ministry to extend human outreach for providing food, shelter, clothing, health care, energy assistance and other life sustaining needs. Priority is given to grant requests directed toward starting new ministries. In 2015, Operation Understanding awarded nine grants to parishes for continuing their outreach programs. Parish recipients included St. John's (Carlisle), St. Andrew's (State College), St. Luke's (Altoona), The Church of Nativity (Newport), Trinity (Williamsport), St. Paul's (Manheim), St. Paul's (Harrisburg), St. John's (Lancaster) and the Lancaster Convocation. A site visit was made to the "*Father Abraham's Children*" ministry at St. Paul's (Manheim). The OU Committee did not receive any grant applications to start new outreach ministries.

Three committee meetings were held in 2015. OU Committee members discussed and evaluated grant applications, awarded funding, reviewed ministry progress reports (done by ministry programs six months following receipt of grant funding) and reviewed grant administrative guidelines, in order to accommodate shifting outreach situations.

The OU Committee began an activity to update its communications for informing parishes and parishioners about OU and the online process to apply for grant funding. First steps were taken to revise a hard copy flier, enhance the OU webpage and to write a webinar presentation containing grant application questions and OU administrative guidelines.

Looking ahead toward 2016, the OU Committee was informed by the Diocese's financial office about an upcoming change by the way the Committee will be receiving monies to award. Since its 1968 inception, the OU Committee received semi-annual allocations, yielded from the interest earned from the Bishop Stevenson Trust, to award to parishes. The amount of funding which the OU Committee had available was limited accordingly to each semi-annual allocation. Beginning in 2016, one lump-sum amount will be given to the OU Committee for awarding throughout the entire year. Online discussions among OU Committee members aided us to modify how and when we will meet to review grant applications.

OU grants are made possible through the generosity of parishes and parishioners who contribute to Eastertide's *Alleluia Appeal*, individual monetary gifts and proceeds from 'Outreach Sunday' offerings.

In 2015, two new members joined the OU Committee: Deborah Robelen and the Rev. Loretta Collins. Gerry Garber accepted the Co-Chair position under Nancy Forgang.

**1 Corinthians 12: 4-7** *"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."*

Encourage parishioners to *activate* their *varieties of services* and start a new outreach ministry.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gerry Garber, Chair