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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **First Presbyterian Church of Houston Selects “Project Flourish” Semi-Finalists**

***\$250,000 to be awarded after “Shark-Tank” style pitching and selection process with local community-minded organizations***

**HOUSTON, Feb. 14, 2020** – First Presbyterian Church of Houston ([fpchouston.org](http://fpchouston.org)) announced the selection of 14 semi-finalists for Project Flourish, its innovative Kingdom-minded program that awards \$250,000 in seed money to support local community-minded entrepreneurial ventures. Final pitches will be presented “Shark-Tank” style at FPC Houston during a private selection process to a panel of judges from March 3– 5. Award recipients will be publicly announced March 10 with a churchwide celebration luncheon Sunday, March 29.

“We are very excited about this year’s semi-finalists. All of them are community-minded organizations that have the ability to make a significant impact addressing the various social challenges facing our city,” said Rev. Jim Birchfield, Senior Pastor of FPC.

The selected semi-finalists represent an array of organizations that tackle the full spectrum of challenges facing Greater Houston. Their organizational missions range from stemming the foster care crisis and reducing food waste, to improving adolescent mental health and employment opportunities for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The semi-finalists were selected from 101 applicants. After winnowing down the field, 14 were chosen to participate in the acceleration part of the program. You can find the full list of 2020 Project Flourish semi-finalists at <https://projectflourish.org/semifinalists/>.

Currently, each semi-finalist is working with a “Navigator” from the congregation who is serving as a mentor. Together, they are participating in an eight-week “acceleration” process designed to refine their proposal. The semi-finalists are receiving valuable consulting support and guidance from the Navigator and their network.

“The acceleration process is much more than just honing a pitch. The Navigators provide business consulting, mentorship, and the valuable insight needed to develop the organization’s vision fully,” said Austin Hermann, FPC’s Director of the Center for Faith, Work, and Innovation. “They can also leverage the Navigators’ existing network and receive guidance on everything from taxes to legal issues.”

At the conclusion of the eight-week acceleration process, semi-finalists will pitch their ideas to a panel of six judges who will have the privilege of awarding funding from the \$250,000 pool.

(more)

**TOGETHER WE ARE *HERE TO SERVE*.**

Prior award recipients of Project Flourish 2018 are thriving and continuing their journey in creating a lasting impact.

- [Every Shelter](#) expanded their operations and are designing new products for refugee families and shelters
- Rescue Houston has now become [Rescue America](#) and has begun opening operations around the country in other cities, like Denver and Omaha
- [Art Park](#) has expanded its programming strategy
- [Coffee and Cake Café](#) is thriving as they create stable employment opportunities for individuals re-entering society after prison

Visit Project Flourish for further information and announcements at <https://projectflourish.org>.

### **About First Presbyterian Church Houston**

Established in 1839, First Presbyterian Church of Houston was the first church to organize and build in Houston. Today its congregation continues to worship and serve from its location in the heart of the city's museum district. Committed to providing opportunities to gather, grow, and go, the FPC Houston community strives to impact Houston and beyond through multiple worship styles, Biblical teaching, and diverse opportunities to serve both locally and globally. FPC is affiliated with ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians. This relationship with the denomination is expressed through participation in its local governing body, the Presbytery of Texas. For more information, visit <https://fpchouston.org>.

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