

Note to media: Please check the list of recipients in the body of this release to see if a congregation(s) in your community is among award recipients. This release and a full list of recipients are available at [www.cpx.cts.edu/renewal](http://www.cpx.cts.edu/renewal) and www.lillyendowment.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Christian Theological Seminary Announces 28 Indiana Congregations Awarded**

**Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program Grants**

Christian Theological Seminary, in its role of administering the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs, has awarded 28 grants to congregations in 20 Indiana communities. The 2017 Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations allows congregations to support their pastors with the gift of extended time away from ministerial duties and responsibilities for reflection and renewal. Pastors use the respite from congregational leadership to engage in renewal experiences that often include travel, scholarly research and immersive experiences with different cultures and traditions.

Congregations awarded the Clergy Renewal Program grants applied to the program to honor their pastors. Congregations in the 2017 Indiana program represent Protestant and nondenominational traditions. Each congregation and its pastor worked together to determines how he or she will use the grant to replenish, restore and renew his or her ministry. Travel to domestic and international destinations and journeys into nature are popular activities for grant recipients. One pastor plans to travel to key European venues to consider the legacy of the Reformation. Another pastor with interests in photography will focus on signs of resurrection and change in nature as a way of gathering inspiration for teaching and sermons.

In addition to travel as a form of renewal, some pastors will use their time away from congregational leadership to engage in new spiritual disciplines, focus on time with loved ones, and study topics that renew their excitement for preaching and congregational leadership. Study topics include congregations engaging vital outreach ministries in settings with changing neighborhood demographics and historical figures of Anglican history.

Since Lilly Endowment introduced the Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations and National Clergy Renewal Program grants in 1999 and 2000, more than 2,450 congregations across the nation have participated in the programs. In the 2017 round of funding, Indiana congregations received grants totaling more than $1.25 million.The grants recognize the tremendous amount of energy, time and leadership that pastors invest in their congregations.

“Lilly Endowment recognizes the important role that pastors play in shaping and guiding the work of Christian churches,” said Dr. Christopher L. Coble, the Endowment’s vice president for religion.  “We can think of no better way to honor these hardworking, faithful men and women than to help them step away from the demands of leadership for a brief period of rest and spiritual renewal.  We regularly hear that these renewal experiences are transformative for pastors, their families and their congregations.”

Congregations were invited to apply for program grants of up to $50,000. The application process was participatory in nature, involving congregations in the design and development of the renewal experiences. Up to $15,000 of the grant could be allocated to fund interim pastoral leadership, as well as renewal activities within the congregation. Pastors were encouraged to include their families in the renewal activities.

The Rev. Dr. Robert Saler, director of the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, noted that the Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations leverages the reciprocal dynamics of support, trust and encouragement reflective of healthy congregations. “The program is designed to respect the innate human need for times of service and replenishment. It provides a means for congregations to express appreciation for their leader’s service and respect for his or her health and energy for continued ministry,” Saler said.

Christian Theological Seminary has administered the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs since 2012. “At a time when society is experiencing unprecedented levels of change at ever increasing speeds, it is rewarding to offer programs that recognize the value of retreat and renewal,” Saler said.

**Award Recipients:**

Bloomington – First Presbyterian Church, the Rev. Andrew Kort

Carmel – St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, the Rev. Jenny Hulen

Columbus – Columbus 1st Baptist Church, the Rev. Daniel Cash

Columbus – Westside Community Church of Columbus, Inc., the Rev. Robert W. Vester

Decatur – Common Ground Church of the Nazarene, the Rev. Kevin Stirratt

Fishers – Christ's Community Church, the Rev. Nathan Pyle

Fort Wayne – Dunfee Missionary Church, the Rev. Dennis Rowe

Frankfort – First Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, the Rev. Pamela Ditson-McCall

Gary – Metropolitan Baptist Church, the Rev. Kenneth Raynard Kelley, Sr.

Gary – Ross Reformed Church of Gary, IN, the Rev. Shawn Gerbers

Goshen – The Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Inc, the Rev. Brenda Sawatzky Paetkau

Goshen – Waterford Mennonite Church, the Rev. Cynthia Voth

Indianapolis – All Souls Unitarian Church, the Rev. Anastassia Zinke

Indianapolis – Allisonville Christian Church, Rev. Diane Spleth

Indianapolis – Common Ground Christian Church, the Rev. Jeffrey T. Krajewski

Indianapolis – Franklin Central Christian Church, the Rev. Gale Stutz

Indianapolis – The Sanctuary Church, the Rev. George Martin

Indianapolis – Westlake Community Church of God, the Rev. Craig Knisley

Kokomo – Morning Star House of the Lord Church of the United Brethren in Christ, Inc., the Rev. Greg Reed

LaPorte – The Presbyterian Church of LaPorte, the Rev. Sally Bolitho Wicks

Madison – First Baptist Church of Madison Indiana, the Rev. Randy Crutchfield

Muncie – Commonway Church, Inc., the Rev. Matthew Dean Carder

New Castle – New Castle First Baptist Church, the Rev. Gerald Ingalls

Scottsburg – Church of the American Martyrs, Inc, the Rev. Joseph L. Villa

Speedway – Speedway Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Rev. Scott Kevin Cox

Valparaiso – Grace Chapel Inc. of Valparaiso, the Rev. Kevin David Gerdt

West Lafayette – Covenant Church (EPC), the Rev. David Wilson Henderson

Westport – Waynesburg Christian Church, the Rev. David Richard Burnett

**About Lilly Endowment Inc.**  
Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly and his two sons, Eli and J.K. Jr., with gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical company.  The Endowment exists to support the causes of religion, education and community development.  Lilly Endowment’s religion grantmaking is designed to deepen and enrich the religious lives of American Christians.  It does this largely through initiatives to enhance and sustain the quality of ministry in American congregations and parishes.  More information can be found at [www.lillyendowment.org](http://www.lillyendowment.org).

**About Christian Theological Seminary**  
Located in Indianapolis, IN, Christian Theological Seminary (CTS) is a fully accredited ecumenical seminary, open to all, affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). It offers nine graduate-level degree programs, each rooted in a rich history of biblical scholarship, theological openness, and spiritual discernment. More than 30 denominations are represented among CTS faculty and students. Additional information about CTS is available at [www.cts.edu](http://www.cts.edu).

SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE FOR RECIPIENTS OF GRANTS IN THE  
2017 LILLY ENDOWMENT CLERGY RENEWAL PROGRAM FOR INDIANA CONGREGATIONS

Contact: (Name) For Immediate Release  
 (Telephone number (Date)  
 and/or email address and/or fax numbers)

(Name of church) has received a grant of (amount of the award) to enable its minister, (name), to participate in the 2017 Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations.

(Name of Church) is one of 28 congregations in Indiana selected to participate in this competitive program, which is funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. and administered by Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis. Established by the Endowment in 1999, the program’s grants allow congregations to support their pastors with the gift of extended time away from their ministerial duties and responsibilities.

Ministers whose congregations are awarded the grants use their renewal experiences to engage in reflection and renewal. The approach respects the “Sabbath time” concept, offering ministers a carefully considered respite that may include travel, study, rest, immersive arts experiences and prayer.

Through the program, Indiana congregations may apply for grants of up to $50,000 to support renewal experiences for their pastors. Collaborative in nature and implementation, the program allows congregations to partner with their ministers in developing experiences that address their unique renewal needs and aspirations. Recognizing that ministers’ families are subject to the stress and demands placed on pastoral leaders, the program encourages pastors to involve their families in renewal activities. Congregational needs during the minister’s renewal experience also are considered. Up to $15,000 of the grant may be used to fund interim pastoral leadership during the pastor’s retreat, as well as for renewal activities within the congregation.

Since the Endowment established the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations in 1999 and the National Clergy Renewal Program for congregations in the other 49 states in 2000, more than 2,450 congregations have participated in the program, including the 28 Indiana congregations receiving grants in 2017.

(Describe your congregation’s and minister’s plans and activities for the renewal period.)

“Lilly Endowment recognizes the important role that pastors play in shaping and guiding the work of Christian churches,” said Dr. Christopher L. Coble, the Endowment’s vice president for religion.  “We can think of no better way to honor these hardworking, faithful men and women than to help them step away from the demands of leadership for a brief period of rest and spiritual renewal.  We regularly hear that these renewal experiences are transformative for pastors, their families and their congregations.”

The Rev Dr. Robert Saler, director of the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs, noted that the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations integrates key attributes of healthy congregations, including a mutual respect for the renewal needs of both ministers and the congregations they serve.

“The program provides an opportunity for congregations to express appreciation for their ministers’ service and leadership,” Saler said. “At a time when leaders are often praised for their pace of innovation and productivity, the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations pays homage to the timeless wisdom embedded in the practice of reflection and renewal.”

Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis directs the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations and a second program for congregations across the United States through its Center for Pastoral Excellence.

**Note to congregations:** Please remember, when you talk or write about this program, that the correct name for the funding organization is Lilly Endowment Inc. or, on second reference, the Endowment.