



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 and www.lillyendowment.org

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Christian Theological Seminary Announces 23 Indiana Congregations Awarded Lilly Endowment 2019 Clergy Renewal Program Grants

Christian Theological Seminary, in its role of administering the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs, has awarded 23 grants to congregations in 15 Indiana communities. The 2019 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 2019 Indiana program represent Catholic, Protestant and nondenominational traditions. Each congregation and its pastor worked together to determine how he or she will use the grants 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 A Coruña, Spain, to walk the Camino dos Faros (the Way of The Lighthouses). Another pastor will embark with family on a road trip from Boston to San Francisco.

In addition to travel as a form of renewal, some pastors will use their time away from their congregations to engage in new spiritual disciplines, focus on time with loved ones, and study topics that renew their excitement for preaching and congregational life. Study topics for congregations include exploring practices of hospitality, service and mentoring, and for pastors, include studying the history of the Restoration movement and the art of woodturning.

Since Lilly Endowment introduced the Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations and National Clergy Renewal Program grants in 1999 and 2000, more than 2,800 congregations across the nation have participated in the programs. In the 2019 round of funding, Indiana congregations received

grants totaling more than \$1.1 million. The grants recognize the tremendous amount of energy, time and leadership that pastors invest in their congregations.

“Pastors play an important role in nourishing the spiritual lives of individuals and in guiding the work of the Christian congregations they serve,” said Christopher L. Coble, Lilly Endowment’s vice president for religion. “Through these grants, we seek to honor pastors for their extraordinary service and enable them to engage in a brief period of rest and renewal. We have learned that such experiences invigorate the leadership of pastors and bring new vitality to their congregations as well.”

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 leaders and invest in their pastors’ 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:

Brownsburg – Good Samaritan Episcopal Church, the Rev. Gray Lesesne

Carmel – Carmel United Methodist Church, the Rev. Amy Mildenberg

Crawfordsville – St. Stephen the First Martyr Orthodox Church, the Rev. Joel Weir

Evansville – First Presbyterian Church of Evansville, Indiana, Inc., the Rev. Kevin Fleming

Evansville – Parish of the Annunciation of the Lord, the Rev. Alex Joseph Zenthoefer

Fishers - New Hope Presbyterian Church, the Rev. Steve Ebling

Fort Wayne – First Presbyterian Church Fort Wayne, the Rev. Youngsoo An

Fort Wayne – Promise Lutheran Church, the Rev. Henry Graf

Goshen – Foundation Family Worship Center, the Rev. James Mark Hochstetler

Lafayette – St. John's Episcopal Church, the Rev. Bradley Pace

Lafayette – Sunrise Christian Reformed Church, the Rev. Randall Bergsma
Lamar – Trinity and St. Peter's United Church of Christ, the Rev. Paul Frederick Jahn
Lebanon – Mt. Tabor Regular Baptist Church, the Rev. Jason Grubbs
Indianapolis – Elevation Church Inc., the Rev. Tony Smith
Indianapolis – Grace Tabernacle Ministries, the Rev. Emmanuel Musinga
Indianapolis – Remedy Christian Church, the Rev. Gregory Edens
Indianapolis – SS Peter and Paul Cathedral Indianapolis, Inc., the Rev. Patrick Joseph Beidelman, STL
Indianapolis – The Episcopal Church of All Saints, the Rev. Elizabeth Wille
Indianapolis – The Way Church, the Rev. Rickey McCray
Marion – Mount Olive United Methodist Church, the Rev. Robert Douglas Barton
Nashville – Nashville United Methodist Church, the Rev. Mary Cartwright
Noblesville – Genesis Church, the Rev. Steve Wallen
Valparaiso – BridgePoint Church of Hobart, the Rev. Matthew Pieters

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.

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.