



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 <https://www.cts.edu/clergy-renewal/for-current-grantees/> and www.lillyendowment.org

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Christian Theological Seminary Announces 28 Indiana Congregations Awarded Lilly Endowment 2020 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 15 Indiana communities. The 2020 Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations enables 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 2020 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, considering the COVID-19 pandemic an opportunity for churches to explore the spiritual benefits of a faith that balances interaction with others and solitary contemplation, plans to travel to Egypt, Greece, Turkey, and places where the early Desert Mothers and Fathers sought refuge. Another pastor will travel to South Africa and embark on a walking safari through the bush at Kruger National Park.

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 cross-generational ministry and the art of compassionate storytelling.

Since Lilly Endowment introduced the Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations and National Clergy Renewal Program grants in 1999 and 2000 respectively, more than 3,400 congregations

across the nation have participated in the programs. In the 2020 round of funding, Indiana congregations received grants totaling more than \$1.3 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:

Chesterton – St. John's United Church, the Rev. Aaron Ban

Columbus – Community Church of Columbus, the Rev. Luke Erb

Columbus – Ogilville Christian Church, the Rev. Martin E. Wright

Crawfordsville – Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Rev. Kelly Nelson

Crawfordsville – Grace and Mercy Ministries, the Rev. Nathan Miller

Elkhart – Church of the Fellowship of Hope, the Rev. Suella Gerber

Fishers – Christ the Savior Lutheran Church, the Rev. Brian D. Derrer

Fort Wayne – Aldersgate United Methodist Church, the Rev. Thomas J. Ream

Fort Wayne – St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, Fr. Daniel Scheidt

Fortville – Fortville Christian Church, the Rev. Rob Rigsbee

Gary – Peter's Rock Missionary Baptist Church, the Rev. Shawn Vaughn

Goshen – Waterford Mennonite Church, the Rev. Katie Misz

Highland – Bible Baptist Church of Griffith, the Rev. Michael Poole

Indianapolis – Chapel Hill United Methodist Church, the Rev. Dave Buckner

Indianapolis – Eastern Star Missionary Baptist Church, the Rev. Jeffrey Allen Johnson

Indianapolis – Faith Missionary Church, the Rev. Joey Woestman

Indianapolis – Northview Christian Life Church, the Rev. Steven Poe

Indianapolis – St. Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church, the Rev. Michelle Roos

Lafayette – Congress Street United Methodist Church, the Rev. Rachel Metheny

Lafayette – Evangelical Covenant Church of Lafayette, the Rev. Stacey Littlefield

Lapel – Ford Street United Methodist Church, the Rev. Glenn Knepp

Logansport – Revolution Community Church, the Rev. Anthony Cozzello

Nappanee – Nappanee First Brethren Church, the Rev. Thomas Schiefer

North Manchester – Manchester Church of the Brethren, the Rev. R. Kurt Borgmann

Seymour – The Point Church of the Nazarene, the Rev. Joel Burbrink

Wabash – The Presbyterian Church, the Rev. Jonathan Cornell

Westfield – Trinity Baptist Church, the Rev. Daniel Minton

Zionsville – Zionsville Presbyterian Church, the Rev. Jeremy (Jerry) Deck

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.