



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 1, 2015

Contact: Robert Saler
317-931-2348 / rsaler@cts.edu

Christian Theological Seminary Announces 26 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 26 grants to congregations in 18 Indiana communities. The 2015 Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations allows congregations to support their pastors with the gift of extended time away from ministerial duties and responsibilities. Pastors use the respite from congregational leadership for reflection and renewal, including travel, scholarly research and immersive experiences with various cultures and traditions.

Congregations awarded the Clergy Renewal Program grants nominated their pastors to receive the honor. Pastors in the 2015 program lead Protestant, Catholic and nondenominational congregations. Each recipient, in consultation with the congregation, 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 various locations to participate in triathlons in order to reflect on the relationship between bodily and spiritual health. Another pastor will tour national parks in order to reconnect with her spirituality through immersion in nature.

Since Lilly Endowment introduced the Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations and National Clergy Renewal Program grants in 1999 and 2000, more than 2,000 congregations across the nation have participated in the programs. In the 2015 round of funding, Indiana congregations received grants totaling more than \$1 million. The grants recognize the tremendous amount of energy, time and leadership that pastors invest in their congregations.

“Lilly Endowment intends for this program to enable pastors to live for a while at a different pace and in a new environment, in Sabbath time and space,” said Dr. Christopher L. Coble, vice president for religion at the Endowment. “We can think of no better way to honor these hardworking, faithful men and

women than to help them experience personal growth and spiritual renewal in ways that they themselves design and find meaningful. 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 experience. 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, research fellow and 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’s Center for Pastoral Excellence was selected in 2012 to administer the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs. “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. “We are honored and privileged to work with Lilly Endowment in its support of congregational leaders.”

Award Recipients:

Attica – First Lutheran Church, Rev. Carolyn Lesmeister

Beech Grove – First Christian Church of Beech Grove, Rev. Paul Hartig

Bloomington – The Emmanuel Baptist Church of Bloomington, Inc., Rev. Thomas Kammel

Carmel – Carmel Lutheran Church, Rev. Max Murphy

Carmel – Northview Christian Life Church, Pr. Mark Crull

Columbus – Reformed Presbyterian Church of Columbus, Rev. Andrew McCracken

Elizabethtown – Crossroads Community Church, Inc., Pr. Tracy McIntyre

Elkhart – Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Pr. Amy Kratzer

Gary – Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church, Pr. Charles Emery

Goshen – Faith Mennonite Church, Rev. Kay Bontrager-Singer

Goshen – College Mennonite Church, Inc., Rev. Philip Waite

Indianapolis – Central Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Rev. Linda McCrae

Indianapolis – Heather Hills Baptist Church, Pr. Brian McCrorie

Indianapolis – Pleasant Run United Church of Christ Corp., Rev. Gregory Denk

Indianapolis – Vida Nueva United Methodist Church, Pr. David Penalva

Indianapolis – Walk in the Light Christian Church, Inc., Pr. Clarence Bolden

New Haven – Grace Gathering Incorporated, Dr. Chris Norman

North Manchester – First Brethren Church of North Manchester, Indiana, Inc., Dr. Kurtis Stout

Seymour – The Point Church of the Nazarene, Inc., Rev. Steven Greene

Shelbyville – First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Rev. Nathan Wilson

South Bend – Christ the King Lutheran Church, Rev. Terri Peterson

South Bend – Saint Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church, Fr. Matthew Cowden

Valparaiso – Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, Rev. Richard Greene

Valparaiso – Living Hope Community Church of the Nazarene, Inc., Pr. Richard Schmidt

Westfield – Radiant Christian Life, Pr. John Cenero

Zionsville – Zionsville Presbyterian Church, Rev. Scott Shelton

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 eight graduate-level degree programs, including programs in theology, ministry, and counseling, with specializations in ministries that emphasize the arts and programs for lifelong learning. More than 30 denominations are represented among CTS faculty and students. Additional information about CTS is available at www.cts.edu.

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 2,000 congregations have participated in the program, including the 26 Indiana congregations receiving grants in 2015.

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

“Lilly Endowment intends for this program to enable pastors to live for a while at a different pace and in a new environment, in Sabbath time and space,” said Dr. Christopher L. Coble, vice president for religion at the Endowment. “We can think of no better way to honor these hardworking, faithful men and women than to help them experience personal growth and spiritual renewal in ways that they themselves design and find meaningful. We regularly hear that these renewal experiences are transformative for pastors, their families and their congregations.”

The Rev Dr. Robert Saler, research fellow and 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.