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Lilly Endowment clergy renewal programs to be administered by Christian Theological Seminary

The Center for Pastoral Excellence at Christian Theological Seminary (CTS), created last month through an \$8 million Lilly Endowment grant, will now administer the Endowment's national and Indiana clergy renewal programs.

The two programs will complement the new CTS center's strategic initiatives that seek to support the ministries of outstanding pastors serving Christian congregations throughout the United States. The change of administration of the programs will be effective for the 2013 National Clergy Renewal Program and the 2013 Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations. No substantial changes to the programs' selection criteria are anticipated for 2013. CTS expects to award as many as 20 grants of up to \$50,000 each to Indiana congregations to support renewal programs for their pastors and 80 awards of similar amounts to congregations in other states.

"The Center for Pastoral Excellence and Lilly Endowment share a commitment to strengthen the quality of pastoral leadership of Christian congregations and to support the ministries of churches," says N. Clay Robbins, the Endowment's president and CEO. "We are delighted that CTS will administer the Endowment's clergy renewal programs, which have helped rejuvenate the ministries of so many pastors across the country."

Through grants to congregations to enable pastors to step away from their daily duties for uninterrupted periods of reflection and renewal, the Indiana and national clergy renewal programs have helped hundreds of ministers replenish their spiritual energies and regain their enthusiasm and creativity for ministry. Since 1999 the Endowment has awarded 404 grants to congregations in Indiana and 1,598 awards to churches in the other 49 states.

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Clergy Renewal Programs
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“By helping students discern their calling to the ministry, preparing seminarians to become outstanding pastoral leaders and providing ongoing support to pastors throughout their careers, CTS provides a comprehensive approach to fostering excellence in the Christian ministry,” says Rev. Dr. Matthew Myer Boulton, CTS president and professor of theology. “The clergy renewal programs will enhance the work of the Center for Pastoral Excellence and extend the seminary’s efforts to support practicing pastors, while also providing seminary students and faculty with valuable insights into the challenges facing pastors and congregations and why seasons of renewal are important for them.”

“Pastors need time away from their congregations to gain new perspectives,” notes the Rev. Dr. Robert Saler, newly named director of the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs at CTS. “The clergy renewal programs free them up to pursue interests that will renew their passions for ministry, and the renewal leaves also give congregations opportunities to rediscover their own gifts and strengths while their pastors are away.”

More information about the 2013 clergy renewal programs is expected to be available on the CTS website (cts.edu/crp) in October. In the meantime, any questions should be addressed to Saler at CTS (317-931-2326).