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Lilly Endowment Names New Program Staff

INDIANAPOLIS – Furthering aims of its religion and community development grantmaking, Lilly Endowment Inc. has named two new program directors.

Chanon Ross, a native of Bend, Oregon, comes to the Endowment from Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey where he directed Princeton’s Institute for Youth Ministry. During more than 15 years working in youth ministry, Ross has helped pastors and congregations develop innovative efforts to build relationships with youth and engage them in vibrant ministries. His experience will be valuable to the Endowment’s efforts to help congregations more effectively engage youth and young adults in congregational life and integrate their religious values with their passion for service.

Ross earned a doctorate in theological ethics from Garrett-Evangelical Theological School, a master of theological studies from Duke Divinity School and a B.A. (youth ministry) from Seattle Pacific University. He will begin at the Endowment in April.

The Rev. Brian Williams, a native of Cleveland, Ohio, has served as a pastor in United Methodist congregations in North Carolina and Indiana since 2006, most recently at University United Methodist Church in Indianapolis. In his leadership of University United Methodist and during five years as pastor of mission and outreach at North United Methodist Church in Indianapolis, he has been especially active in helping congregations develop ministries to serve their neighborhoods and in strengthening the work of many local community organizations across Indianapolis. Williams will have responsibilities in the Endowment’s religion and community development divisions. In religion, his knowledge and experience will enhance the Endowment’s efforts to strengthen pastoral leadership in diverse communities and help congregations develop stronger outreach ministries. In community development, Williams will work to further the Endowment’s efforts to improve the quality of life in neighborhoods, with a special focus on endeavors involving faith-based collaborations.

Williams earned a master of divinity degree from Duke Divinity School. He earned an MBA from the University of Michigan and a B.S. (management/marketing) from Purdue University. Williams will begin at the Endowment in July.

In announcing these appointments N. Clay Robbins, the Endowment’s chairman, president and CEO, said Ross and Williams will bring significant expertise and insight to the Endowment.

“Brian is an exceptionally thoughtful and respected pastor and community leader. He will enhance the Endowment’s initiatives to strengthen pastoral leadership and congregational vitality in a range of contexts and deepen our understanding of faith-based community development,” Robbins said. “Chanon

is widely recognized as a national expert and leader in youth ministry – both in the field and in the academy. He will help advance Endowment-supported initiatives to engage the spirits and passions of youth and young adults in the life and service of congregations throughout the country.”

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 business, Eli Lilly and Company. In keeping with the wishes of its founders, the Endowment exists to support the causes of community development, education and religion. The Endowment’s religion grantmaking is designed to deepen and enrich the religious lives of American Christians, which it does largely through initiatives to enhance and sustain the quality of ministry in American congregations and parishes. The Endowment also maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis and its home state, Indiana.