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Third round of Indiana clergy renewal program under way

Once again congregations around the state will have the opportunity to work with their pastors to fashion a renewal program and apply for a grant of up to \$30,000 for participation in the 2001 Indiana Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations, funded by Lilly Endowment Inc.

The grants mean that the pastors of these congregations are able to step away from their duties to engage in extended periods of renewal that will refresh them professionally and personally – and in the process make them better pastors leading healthier congregations. The competitive program is open to all Indiana congregations with an ordained pastor.

Twenty-three congregations were selected in 1999, and the 30 participating congregations in the 2000 program were announced in May.

Working in conjunction with their congregations and with their support, pastors plan time that will allow them to travel to sites around the world important to their denomination's history or to their own ministry; work on creative projects such as writing, study and research; spend valuable time with their family; or engage in personal and professional development. The renewal time is tailored to the needs of the individual pastors and congregations.

“Many people underestimate the strains that, over the months and years, take their toll on the effectiveness of pastors,” said Craig Dykstra, Endowment vice president for religion. “These renewal grants have gone to churches of all varieties – urban, suburban,

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rural with small, medium and large memberships. We have found that pastors and their congregations welcome these opportunities to take some intentional time away and replenish their energies and imaginations and prepare for the next steps in their churches' lives. The Endowment is pleased to be able to encourage this process.”

Up to \$10,000 of each grant may be used for congregational expenses associated with the renewal program; the remainder may be used for the pastor's renewal program.

Pastors and congregations interested in the 2001 program may receive a brochure and application by writing the Endowment, 2801 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, Ind. 46208, or by calling 317/924-5471. Included with this information will be an invitation for interested persons to attend an information session Oct. 16 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at North United Methodist Church, 3808 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis.

Deadline for applications is Feb. 13, 2001. The awards will be announced in May.

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Note: The 2001 Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations is similar to but separate from the Endowment's National Clergy Renewal Program. The first awards in the national program will be announced by the end of the year.