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Lilly Endowment announces 2003 Indiana Clergy Renewal Program

All Indiana congregations with an ordained minister are invited to participate in the fifth year of the Indiana Clergy Renewal Program, which offers ministers the funds to take a break from their arduous duties and offers congregational members the opportunity to take a larger role in the functioning of the church.

As many as 40 congregations will be selected in the 2003 Indiana Clergy Renewal Program, funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. For the 2003 program, the maximum amount of each award will be \$45,000. Congregations may use up to \$15,000 of that total to cover pastoral functions while the pastor is away and certain other congregational expenses.

Since 1999, 120 Indiana congregations have been awarded clergy renewal grants. Their pastors have circled the globe visiting holy sites, renewing family ties, writing books, going on mission trips, enjoying nature's serene places, taking up new or long-lost hobbies, and visiting other churches to see how they do things.

Their congregations have seen them off with fond farewells and blessings and welcomed them back with potluck suppers; congregational members have assumed some of the ministers' responsibilities and gained a new appreciation for all they do and a new understanding of the demands made upon them.

"Few people understand the many roles that today's ministers must play. They are expected to be inspiring preachers, neighborhood leaders, fund raisers, teachers, counselors and skillful administrators," said Craig Dykstra, Endowment vice president

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for religion. “This program allows the minister and his or her congregation to work together to plan a program of renewal and refreshment for the pastor and his or her family. The purpose is to honor them for their good work, restore their energies and enhance their vision for ministry.

“We are constantly struck by the genuine affection these congregations have for their ministers. They want them to be happy and stay with them, and they are willing to ‘fill in the gaps’ while their minister is gone. They realize that their own enthusiasm and energy for church life will be revitalized with a revitalized pastor,” he said.

“Indeed, we are hearing glowing reports from previous recipients that the program is doing what it is intended to do: give pastors a chance to step away briefly from their daily duties, which often run around the clock and around the year,” he noted. “In these extended periods of sabbath rest, most pastors discover new ways to balance and integrate the many aspects of their lives and work so they become whole again. Their renewal time away gives ministers an opportunity to get more closely in touch with the spiritual realities that led them to the ministry in the first place.”

The Endowment has planned an informational program for pastors, their spouses and representatives of their congregations. It will be held Oct. 10 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at North United Methodist Church, 3808 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, Ind. 46208.

To receive an application/brochure and an invitation and reservation card for that meeting, please contact the Endowment. Call 317/924-5471, or write Lilly Endowment, 2801 N. Meridian St., P.O. Box 88068, Indianapolis, Ind. 46208-0068, or download the information from the program’s Web site, www.indianaclergy.org.

All applications for the Indiana program must be postmarked by Feb. 17, 2003. Grant awards will be announced by May 2003.

The Indiana program is separate from the Endowment’s National Clergy Renewal Program under which congregations in the other 49 states receive similar awards.