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Lilly Endowment selects 32 Indiana congregations for Clergy Renewal Program

Thirty-two churches in Indiana, representing some 16 different denominations and traditions, will receive grants of up to \$45,000 each to provide their pastor (or pastors) with specially formulated programs of personal and professional renewal. In this, the sixth year of the Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations, Lilly Endowment Inc. will award \$1.3 million in a continuing effort to reenergize and rejuvenate congregations and their leaders.

The proposals virtually burst with excitement as congregations and their pastors collaborate to plan the sabbaticals, usually three months long, that take their pastors into their own backyards and all over the world to reconnect with the roots of their faith and pastorate.

Four of the congregations number fewer than 100 members; two have more than 1,000. Four women are solo pastors, and two others are co-pastors with their husbands. They represent 19 cities and towns and 15 counties.

“We have been administering this program since 1999, so each year we are gaining more and more evidence that pastors, their families – and their congregations – are finding this renewal experience an absolutely pivotal point in their lives,” says Craig Dykstra, Endowment vice president for religion.

(more)

Clergy Renewal Program
Add 1

“The opportunity to get away from their busy days as pastors for an extended period of time and delve into activities that expand their horizons, deepen their spiritual lives and replenish their energies is an opportunity of tremendous value that pays dividends for years.

“The congregations gain as well by sharing in the planning of the sabbatical. This gives church members new insight into the work that pastors do and what sustains them in their ministries. Some of these pastors have served more than 20 years without a sabbatical. Congregations have a great fondness for their pastors and want to keep them strong and healthy. Further, up to \$15,000 of the \$45,000 grant may be used for congregational renewal activities during the pastor’s absence. The entire program has been a win-win situation,” Dykstra said.

Pastors need to get away to clear their heads and hearts so they can look ahead as they face new challenges – learning how to handle burgeoning growth, looking for ways to deal with changing demographics in their communities, deciding how to organize new programs, or thinking through changes in worship. Some are facing critical junctures in their personal lives – their children are just about to leave for college or enter the career world, they are celebrating milestones like wedding or ordination anniversaries – and they want to figure out how to make the remaining years of their ministries as vigorous as the first.

The pastors and their families will visit churches in Africa, spend time in India and at Mother Teresa’s mission in Calcutta, tour medieval and Reformation sites in Europe, as well as sites in Greece and Turkey where Christianity was born. They will rent villas in Italy and study Renaissance art, study sea turtles on a North Carolina barrier island, attend family reunions, and journey to Central and South America for “immersion” in the Spanish language.

(more)

Clergy Renewal Program
Add 2

They will drive Route 66 and see American sites in RVs, enjoy the majesty of national parks in the West, and renew talents like woodworking and painting. They will travel to other congregations in the United States with similar missions, hike in forests and woodlands, tour monasteries in other lands, ride bicycles, study drama, go on personal retreats, and keep journals.

As one minister previously supported by one of these grants remarked after his return: "I seem to have developed a renewed understanding that God is deeply involved here ... I worry less and have more energy to spend in offering ministry."

The congregations and pastors selected for the 2004 program are the following:

Bethany Lutheran Church (Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod), Fort Wayne
\$45,000
Charles E. Varsogea

Christ Church Cathedral (Episcopal), Indianapolis, \$23,159
Kathleen J. Cullinane

Churubusco United Methodist Church, \$45,000
Christine Newman-Jacobs

Cicero United Methodist Church, \$44,740
Vicki L. Hobbs

College Mennonite Church, Goshen, \$44,939
Firman Gingerich

Cornerstone Baptist Church (Baptist Bible Fellowship), Indianapolis, \$44,970
Donald R. Mitchell

Cornerstone of Hope Church (Independent Baptist), Indianapolis, \$44,957
Stephen L. Wilson Sr.

Donica Memorial Church of God, Bedford, \$45,000
Kendall M. Hendrickson

(more)

Clergy Renewal Program
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Eastview Christian Church (Independent Christian), Martinsville, \$40,145
Rick Miller

First Baptist Church of Greenwood (American Baptist), \$41,465
Thomas M. Bridges

First Baptist Church, North Indianapolis (Missionary Baptist), \$45,000
Ivan Douglas Hicks

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Richmond, \$45,000
Dixie J. Miller

First Christian Church of Jeffersonville (Disciples of Christ), \$31,937
Bruce A. Barkhauer

First United Methodist Church, Noblesville, \$45,000
N. Jack Wolfe

First United Methodist Church of Valparaiso, \$43,245
David M. Byrum

Grace Missionary Church, Camby, \$29,105
James A. Taylor Jr.

Holy Family Catholic Church, New Albany, \$33,319
Wilfred E. Day

Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish (Catholic), Indianapolis, \$45,000
Jeffrey H. Godecker

Macedonian-Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox St. Nicholas Church, Fort Wayne,
\$40,970
Michael Myers

Madison Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Frankton, \$45,000
Christina E. Dougherty

Middlebury Church of the Brethren, \$35,429
Russell J. Jensen

(more)

Clergy Renewal Program
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Monroe City First Church of God, \$44,831
Mark L. Nelson

New Beginning Ministries (Pentecostal), Indianapolis, \$30,848
James L. Tyson

New Life Community Church of God, Noblesville, \$44,971
L. Fred Harting

Northside New Era Baptist Church (Missionary Baptist), Indianapolis, \$44,930
Clarence C. Moore Jr.

Northview Church of the Brethren, Indianapolis, \$45,000
Philip W. Rieman and Louise B. Rieman

Resurrection Evangelical Lutheran Church (Evangelical Lutheran Church in
America [ELCA]), Indianapolis, \$45,000
David P. Schreiber

St. Patrick Catholic Church, Oxford, \$34,400
Donald J. Eder

St. Philip Neri Catholic Church, Indianapolis, \$44,825
Carlton J. Beever

Sinai Synagogue (United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism), South Bend,
\$40,736
Michael B. Friedland

South Bend Christian Reformed Church, \$44,996
Leonard J. Vander Zee

Trinity Lutheran Church, Goshen (ELCA), \$44,915
Duane E. Schafer

(more)

Clergy Renewal Program
Add 5

Endowment officials anticipate that the Indiana program will continue, and an announcement is expected soon.

Besides this program, the Endowment offers a National Clergy Renewal Program for congregations and their ministers in the other 49 states. The deadline for those applications is June 25, and the recipients will be announced in September.