



Note to media: Please check the list of recipients in the body of this release to see if a congregation(s) in your community is among award recipients. This release and a full list of recipients are available at [www.cpx.cts.edu/renewal](http://www.cpx.cts.edu/renewal) and [www.lillyendowment.org](http://www.lillyendowment.org)

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### **Christian Theological Seminary Announces 22 Indiana Congregations Awarded Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program Grants**

Christian Theological Seminary, in its role of administering the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs, has awarded 22 grants to congregations in 15 Indiana communities. The 2013 Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations allows congregations to support their pastors with the gift of extended time away from their ministerial duties and responsibilities. Pastors use their respite from congregational leadership for reflection and renewal, including travel, scholarly research, and immersive experiences with various cultures and traditions.

Congregations awarded the Clergy Renewal Program grants nominated their pastors to receive the honor. Pastors in the 2013 program lead Protestant, Catholic and nondenominational congregations. Each recipient, in consultation with the congregation, determines how he or she will use the grant to replenish, restore and renew his or her ministry. Travel to domestic and international destinations and journeys into nature are popular activities for grant recipients. One pastor plans to travel to South Africa for an exploration of how South Africans engage themes of hospitality in their life and work, while another will explore Atlanta, Georgia's historic black churches. Another pastor will pursue a passion for woodworking.

Since Lilly Endowment introduced the Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations and National Clergy Renewal Program grants in 1999 and 2000, more than 1,800 congregations across the nation have participated in the programs. In the 2013 round of funding, Indiana congregations received grants totaling nearly \$1 million. The grants recognize the tremendous amount of energy, time and leadership that pastors invest in their congregations.

"Lilly Endowment intends for this program to enable pastors to live for a while at a different pace and in a new environment, in Sabbath time and space," said Dr. Christopher L. Coble, vice president for religion at the Endowment. "We can think of no better way to honor these hardworking, faithful men and

women than to help them experience personal growth and spiritual renewal in ways that they themselves design and find meaningful. We regularly hear that these renewal experiences are transformative for pastors, their families and their congregations.”

Congregations were invited to apply for program grants of up to \$50,000. The application process was participatory in nature, involving congregations in the design and development of the renewal experience. Up to \$15,000 of the grant could be allocated to fund interim pastoral leadership, as well as renewal activities within the congregation. Pastors are encouraged to include their families in the renewal activities.

Rev. Dr. Robert Saler, research fellow and director of the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs, part of the Center for Pastoral Excellence at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, noted that the Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations leverages the reciprocal dynamics of support, trust and encouragement reflective of healthy congregations. “The program is designed to respect the innate human need for times of service and replenishment. It provides a means for congregations to express appreciation for their leader’s service and respect for his or her health and energy for continued ministry,” said Saler.

Christian Theological Seminary’s Center for Pastoral Excellence was selected in 2012 to administer the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs. “At a time when society is experiencing unprecedented levels of change at ever increasing speeds, it is rewarding to offer programs that recognize the value of retreat and renewal,” said Saler. “We are honored and privileged to work with Lilly Endowment in its support of congregational leaders.”

#### **Award Recipients:**

##### **Anderson**

St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Pr. Matthew Manning

##### **Angola**

First Congregational United Church of Christ  
Pr. Deborah Davis

##### **Carmel**

Chinese Community Church of Indianapolis  
Pr. Justin Young

##### **Columbia City**

Columbia City Church of the Brethren  
Pr. Dennis Beckner

**Evansville**

East Side Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Pr. Linda Parker

**Fort Wayne**

Fellowship Missionary Church  
Pr. Joseph Johns

**Highland**

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Pr. Jason Jones

**Indianapolis**

College Park Church  
Pr. Mark Vroegop

First Baptist Church of Indianapolis  
Pr. Frederick Lewis

Lakeview Temple  
Pr. Ronald Bontrager

Oasis of Hope Baptist Church  
Pr. Frank Alexander

St. John's Episcopal Church  
Pr. Jeffrey Bower

Speedway Church of Christ  
Pr. Kent Ellett

Trinity Church  
Pr. Ryan Poe

Trinity Episcopal Church  
Pr. Karen King

**Lafayette**

Central Presbyterian Church  
Pr. William Smutz

**Logansport**

Shiloh Christian Church  
Pr. Timothy McKaig

**Monticello**

Monticello United Methodist Church  
Pr. Brian Beeks

**New Palestine**

Cross of Grace Lutheran Church  
Pr. Mark Havel

**Noblesville**

Grace Community Church  
Pr. Keith Carlson

**Saint John**

Suncrest Christian Church  
Pr. Gregory Lee

**Valparaiso**

BridgePoint Church of Hobart  
Pr. Jeffrey Cagwin

**About Christian Theological Seminary**

Located in Indianapolis, IN, Christian Theological Seminary (CTS) is a fully accredited ecumenical seminary, open to all, affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). It offers eight graduate-level degree programs, including programs in theology, ministry, and counseling, with specializations in ministries that emphasize the arts and programs for lifelong learning. More than 30 denominations are represented among CTS faculty and students. Additional information about CTS is available at [www.cts.edu](http://www.cts.edu).