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**EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE  
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## **28 Indiana congregations receive clergy renewal awards from Lilly Endowment**

The Rev. Scott Smith will learn Spanish and spend time in various church communities in Latin America in an attempt to relate better to his new Hispanic neighbors in Indianapolis.

The Rev. Peggy Nowling of the First Baptist Church in Lafayette wants to “live out her passions” by interviewing women leaders and spending time with her extended family. Her congregation wants to develop some of its own gifts and talents.

As a way of expressing his “gratitude and continued devotion to Jesus and Mary, his mother,” the Rev. Todd Riebe will embark on a worldwide pilgrimage of Marian shrines, and his Catholic parish in Richmond wants him to enjoy himself.

The Rev. Douglas Kaufman of the Benton Mennonite Church in Goshen will be in residence at the Theological Seminary Bienenberg in Basel, Switzerland, where he hopes to explore the origins of the Mennonite and Amish traditions, both of which still live in his own congregation.

The Rev. Raymond McDonald II plans to “travel light” and head for Africa to study at a Kenyan seminary, visit national parks, and enjoy more time with his family.

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These five examples provide just a taste of the creative renewal programs on which pastors serving the 28 congregations that have received grants in the 2007 Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. will embark.

(more)

## Clergy Renewal Awards Add 1

This is the ninth year for the program that invites congregations and ministers to consider and plan a period of “intentional reflection and renewal.” It provides a time for ministers to take a break from their daily obligations and gain the fresh perspective and renewed energy that a carefully considered “sabbath time” of travel, study, rest and prayer can provide.

Scott Smith, pastor of a small, 120-member congregation on Indianapolis’ east side, says that the emphasis of their mission work was almost exclusively focused on missionaries in other countries. Then they looked around and saw the “world is in our own backyard.” They are in the initial stages of beginning a new congregation and sharing their building with a new Spanish-speaking congregation. They hope they become “sister churches.”

Smith, his wife and their adult children will head for Costa Rica to spend time with American Baptist missionaries, then move on to Peru and Chile. After the children return to the United States, Smith and his wife will continue their sojourn in Bolivia, Argentina and Ecuador. His plan also includes retreats at the Abbey of Gethsemani, a Trappist monastery in Kentucky that is a special place for him.

Meanwhile members of the congregation, aiming for much more than a few shared meals with their new neighbors, will take Spanish lessons at the Indy Foreign Language Academy and learn about cultural sensitivity and conflict resolution training. They will create a library of books and other media in English and Spanish.

And there is, of course, soccer. Their small church sits on four acres, much of which is a grassy area. They plan to install soccer and basketball goals and playground equipment where children and youth from diverse backgrounds can play games they all know and love.

Peggy Jones Nowling, the first woman pastor of the 171-year-old First Baptist Church in Lafayette, encourages her parishioners to “live out their passions.” She intends to do the same by studying the subject of how women lead.

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Clergy Renewal Awards  
Add 2

She will travel to Kansas City and stay at a Benedictine monastery while she interviews friends and leaders. Then it's on to Prague to meet the Rev. Lauren Bathell, a Baptist missionary who won the Humanitarian Award at the 2005 Baptist World Alliance convention. Besides reading about leadership, Nowling will indulge her love of mystery stories.

Also included is a train excursion to Seattle and an Alaskan cruise with her family. As a single mother, Nowling has never had the resources to take her children on a "real trip."

Todd Riebe arrived in Richmond in January 1995 to fill a two-week pastoral vacancy. Twelve years later he's still there, ministering to a congregation of more than 1,700 families. Once served by six priests, the Richmond community now has only two and is preparing in the coming years to have only one. He has presided over the consolidation of three parishes – St. Andrew's, St. Mary's and Holy Family – and guided the establishment of Seton Catholic High School in Richmond in 2002.

He knows that the pace of his ministry – hundreds of marriages, funerals, baptisms, hospital and nursing home visits, plus thousands of Masses and confessions, not to mention the myriad other pastoral duties – has not allowed him the time for prayer, reading, reflection and friendships that is crucial for sustaining good ministry over the long haul.

Riebe will begin by stopping, by finding stillness in a retreat at a Benedictine monastery in Minnesota. Then, to reconnect with his loved ones, he will join a nine-member family reunion at a Wisconsin cabin. The main thrust of his renewal program, however, will involve a six-week pilgrimage of Marian shrines: Knock, Ireland; Mejugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina; Rome; Lourdes, France; Fatima, Portugal; and Mexico City.

(more)

Clergy Renewal Awards  
Add 3

Not too long ago, Doug Kaufman, a Mennonite minister, learned that his grandfather was Amish, a group that broke away from the Mennonites in 17th century Europe. To explore his family's heritage through an "immersion in Swiss Mennonite life" is his renewal goal. For about a month he will settle in Basel, a city at the junction of Switzerland, France and Germany and the heart of where Swiss-German Mennonites have lived since 1525. Having already studied Spanish, Greek, Hebrew and French, Kaufman will add German to his "languages learned" list.

His wife and children will join him to visit his sister in Berne and go hiking, followed by bike riding in Alsace, France, and Rhineland in Germany. They will save the cultural attractions of Paris for the finale of their European trip.

Raymond McDonald, who has led an 800-member congregation in Gary for 12 years, says he needs a break. His congregation is beginning a new church-planting venture in a suburb, and he can foresee that the responsibilities of leading two congregations will be "extremely demanding." He notes that "it has become increasingly difficult to completely plan a day because the 'sudden,' the 'immediate' and the 'tragic' have the ability to break into every schedule. Active in many church and civic organizations, McDonald envisions the sabbatical as "time away from phones and appointments to focus on the basics of ministry."

Kenya will be his base of operations. He will settle into the Mwangaza Jesuit Retreat Center in Nairobi, study at a Kenyan seminary, learn about African Christianity, spend time in silent retreat, and visit churches and hospitals, homes for orphans and AIDS organizations. A family vacation awaits him on his return.

Any congregation in Indiana with an ordained minister is eligible to apply for a clergy renewal grant. The maximum award is \$45,000, and up to \$15,000 of that amount may be used for congregational activities while the pastor is away.

The 28 grants this year total nearly \$1.2 million. They represent 18 cities and town and 17 counties. Eight congregations have fewer than 200 persons at worship, most

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Clergy Renewal Awards  
Add 4

have 300 or fewer, while two have regular worship attendance of more than 1,000.

Grantees include congregations from 10 different denominations or traditions.

“As they prepare their proposals, we ask congregations and ministers to consider the question – ‘What will make your heart sing?’” – said Craig Dykstra, senior vice president for religion at the Endowment. “They always come up with wonderful and imaginative yet doable ways to fulfill their dreams. Their time away has freed them up to pursue personal interests and needs in ways that have given them new energy for ministry – and the congregations have discovered that they too experienced a refreshment of their own and newfound sense of their own strengths.”

The Endowment’s larger goal is to bolster the good work that America’s pastors and congregations are accomplishing day in and day out, to reinforce and build upon the strengths that are evident on both sides of the pulpit. “In our religion grantmaking, we hope to encourage and support excellent pastors. It is no secret that pastors who have reconnected themselves to the passions that led them to the ministry in the first place are more likely to lead healthy and vibrant congregations,” Dykstra said.

The congregations and pastors selected for the 2007 program are the following:

Arlington Heights Baptist Church (American Baptist Churches, USA  
[ABC, USA]), Indianapolis, \$45,000  
D. Scott Smith

Benton Mennonite Church, Goshen, \$45,000  
Douglas H. Kaufman

Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship, Goshen, \$31,209  
Anita Y. Kehr

Chesterfield Community Church of God (Church of God, Anderson), \$44,522  
Claude D. Oliver Jr.

Christ Episcopal Church, Madison, \$45,000  
Richard L. Draper

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Clergy Renewal Awards  
Add 5

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church (Evangelical Church in America [ELCA]),  
Kokomo, \$44,751  
Mark E. Sloss

Church at the Crossing (Church of God, Anderson), Indianapolis, \$32,796  
Samme L. Rousopoulos

Community Church of Columbus (nondenominational), \$44,745  
Charles G. Coleman

East Side Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Evansville, \$44,820  
Linda C. Parker

Eastgate Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Indianapolis, \$44,954  
Robert T. Henning

Epiphany Lutheran Church (ELCA), Fort Wayne, \$44,853  
Richard L. Hartman

First Baptist Church (ABC, USA), Lafayette, \$45,000  
Peggy Jones Nowling

First English Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA), Mishawaka, \$44,283  
L. Mark Jepson

First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis, \$35,600  
Ryan J. Ahlgrim

Garfield Park Baptist Church (ABC, USA), Indianapolis, \$38,047  
Judith K. Fackenthal

Geist Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Indianapolis, \$44,138  
Randal A. Updegraff Spleth

Irvington United Methodist Church, Indianapolis, \$45,000  
J. Scott Wood

Judson Road Christian Church (independent Christian), Kokomo, \$45,000  
Gary D. Carpenter

Living Hope Community Church of the Nazarene, Valparaiso, \$24,127  
Richard L. Schmidt

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Clergy Renewal Awards  
Add 6

Mitchell Church of Christ, \$44,981  
Allen W. Burris

St. Andrew Catholic Church, Richmond, \$44,995  
Todd Riebe

St. Andrew United Methodist Church, West Lafayette, \$45,000  
Timothy W. Burchill

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Valparaiso, \$45,000  
C. Patrick Ormos

St. John Baptist Church (Progressive National Baptist Convention), Gary,  
\$41,805  
Raymond McDonald II

St. Mark's United Methodist Church, Decatur, \$44,396  
Jeffrey S. Taylor

St. Matthew Catholic Church, Mount Vernon, \$33,702  
Kenneth R. Steckler

Zionsville Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), \$43,100  
William C. McGraw

Zionsville United Methodist Church, \$36,853  
Theodore R. Blosser

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

Besides this program, the Endowment offers the National Clergy Renewal Program for congregations and their ministers in the other 49 states. For more information about either program, see the Endowment's website, [lillyendowment.org](http://lillyendowment.org).