



(Note to media: Naturally, the Endowment would appreciate your notice of this program in your publication/broadcast. Beyond that, of course, if you know of any pastors and/or congregation members who may be interested in the renewal program, please feel free to share this information with them.)

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Lilly Endowment awards clergy renewal grants to 30 Indiana congregations

Thirty Indiana congregations – from Granger to New Albany – have received grants in Lilly Endowment’s 2009 Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations. They represent 14 counties, 18 cities and towns, 11 Christian denominations and one reformed Jewish synagogue.

“Life-changing pilgrimages” is the term many pastors who have benefited from a clergy renewal grant use to describe their time away from the daily duties of congregational leadership. For them, their renewal leaves are rare opportunities to receive the gift of time in a new way—to rest, pray, explore new worlds, and deepen their relationships with those they love.

Through this program, the Endowment invites congregations throughout the state to apply for grants of up to \$50,000 to support an extended period of intentional reflection and renewal that ministers, working with their congregations, design to suit their own needs and aspirations for pastoral renewal. The pastors are welcome to include their families in the renewal activities.

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Clergy Renewal for Indiana Congregations
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Further, up to \$15,000 of the grant can be used for the congregation to pay for worship and pastoral care support while the pastor is away, as well as for renewal activities within the congregation.

“We hear wonderful stories from pastors and congregations that have participated in this program in the past 11 years,” says Craig Dykstra, the Endowment’s senior vice president for religion. “The pastors tell us that their sabbaticals have given them new energy for ministry and often a fresh vision for how they can do it better. The congregations find the programs to be renewing as well. Church members usually gain new appreciation for all that their pastors do. They also discover talents and capacities for ministry among themselves that come to the fore during their pastor’s absence.”

Most of the pastors will spend significant portions of their renewal in spiritual enrichment. They will set aside times for prayer, meditation and spiritual direction in various retreat centers and monasteries. Four pastors plan to explore the connections between creation and spirituality in Celtic spiritual traditions with pilgrimages to the island of Iona and to Ireland. Pastors John Long and Janice Kulp Long, Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren, Fort Wayne, will begin their journey of sabbath rest at the equatorial Amazon of Ecuador where they will experience an indigenous culture living in close connection to creation.

Many of the newly funded proposals describe creative ways that pastors are choosing to expand their horizons and enhance their capacities to serve the diversity of people who are members of their congregations. The Rev. Suhyoung Baik, who serves Broadway United Methodist Church, Indianapolis, is fluent both in Korean and Japanese. He will spend time in both countries in order to “help renew his vision for multicultural ministry” at Broadway. The Rev. Teri L. Thomas, senior pastor at Northminster Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis, will visit a refugee camp in Eritrea, followed by time in Ethiopia and Kenya, in order to become more familiar with the places from which some of her congregation’s newest members have emigrated.

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Several pastors will devote part of their renewal time to improving their physical health, participating in fitness programs of all kinds—hiking, mountain climbing, working with a trainer or learning to prepare nutritious meals. Pastor Pamela S. Yoder, First Mennonite Church of Middlebury, will spend some of her renewal time preparing to run a marathon—at the site of the original marathon in ancient Greece.

Several pastors in this year's class continue a tradition of returning to beloved artistic endeavors. For the Rev. Kevin Armstrong, North United Methodist Church, Indianapolis, the capacity to pay careful attention is a crucial aspect of Christian faith. So, he will attend a writing festival for people of faith, work on his poetry, and develop his skills as an amateur photographer—all of which, in his view, enhance people's capacities to see things truly, clearly and deeply. So that his parishioners can join him in learning the same discipline, church members will be given disposable cameras to take pictures that capture aspects of the good, the true and the beautiful from their particular points of view.

Other pastors plan photo safaris in the Alaskan wilderness and in Kenya; yet another will pursue her passion for singing and weaving during a sojourn in the Scottish highlands.

Many of these pastors will study denominational and family roots in places such as Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Turkey, Kenya and Denmark. The Rev. Peter J. Wallace, Michiana Covenant Presbyterian Church, Granger, will pursue his interest in writing and teaching history by doing some research on Robert J. Breckinridge, a 19th century civic and religious leader, by visiting archives in Kentucky and at the Library of Congress. The Rev. William D. Peugeot, Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church, West Lafayette, will go to France to learn more about his ancestral heritage—family and congregational. While there, he will serve in a Lutheran congregation, immerse himself in learning the French language, explore various hiking trails, and delve into the stories of his ancestors who in 1898 converted a bicycle factory into one of the first automobile factories.

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“The main purpose of Lilly Endowment’s grantmaking in religion,” says Dykstra, “is to strengthen and support excellence in pastoral ministry. Through its clergy renewal programs, the Endowment seeks not only to provide opportunities that enable good and faithful ministers to sustain their spiritual depth and pastoral strength over the course of their careers, but also to honor them publicly for the vital roles they play in the lives of their people and in the larger communities of which they are a part. We are eager to bolster the good work that America’s pastors and congregations are accomplishing in their mutual ministries.”

With these grants, the Endowment has made a total of 336 clergy renewal grants to Indiana congregations since the program began in 1999. In addition to the Indiana program, the Endowment also conducts a national clergy renewal program. Grants in that program will be announced later this fall.

The congregations and pastors selected for the 2009 Indiana Clergy Renewal program are as follows:

Ahavat Achim Temple Israel (Reformed Jewish), West Lafayette, \$50,000
Audrey S. Pollack

Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren, Fort Wayne, \$49,997
John R. and Janice Kulp Long

Broadway United Methodist Church, Indianapolis, \$50,000
Suhyoung Baik

Church of the Four Seasons United Methodist Church, Crown Point, \$49,948
Chris D. Nunley

Coalbush United Methodist Church, Mishawaka, \$42,410
James Davidson

CrossRoads Church (Presbyterian Church USA [PCUSA]), Westfield, \$49,995
Eric G. Lohe

First Baptist Church (Southern Baptist Convention), Griffith, \$49,680
Scott S. Hobbs

(more)

Clergy Renewal for Indiana Congregations

Add 4

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Mooresville, \$48,516
Kelly F. Carter

First Mennonite Church, Middlebury, \$49,893
Pamela S. Yoder

Granger Community Church (United Methodist), \$50,000
R. Mark Beeson

Michiana Covenant Presbyterian Church (Presbyterian Church in America [PCA]),
Granger, \$50,000
Peter J. Wallace

Morning Star Church (Mennonite), Muncie, \$49,995
Simon Maina Mungai and Gladys M. Maina

Mount Tabor Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), New Albany, \$49,955
William John (Jack) Cormack

New Joy Lutheran Church (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America [ELCA]),
Westfield,
\$44,620
Connie A. Thomson

North United Methodist Church, Indianapolis, \$49,988
Kevin R. Armstrong

Northminster Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), Indianapolis, \$49,935
Teri L. Thomas

Our Saviour Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA), West Lafayette, \$50,000
William D. Peugeot

Redeemer Presbyterian Church (PCA), Indianapolis, \$49,989
Jason T. Dorsey

Resurrection Catholic Church, Evansville, \$31,750
Philip J. Kreilein

Rhema Word Ministries (nondenominational), Anderson, \$50,000
Marcus D. Cooley

St. Jude Church (Catholic), Indianapolis, \$50,000
Stephen J. Banet

St. Lawrence Catholic Church, Lafayette, \$49,870
Daniel B. Gartland

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St. Luke's United Methodist Church, Indianapolis, \$48,310
Linda S. McCoy

St. Maria Goretti Catholic Church, Westfield, \$49,993
Kevin J. Haines

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, \$44,490
Jean M. Denton

St. Paul's United Church of Christ, Evansville, \$49,500
Daniel R. Sather

St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Franklin, \$35,970
David R. Ferner

St. Thomas Lutheran Church (ELCA), Bloomington, \$50,000
Lyle E. McKee

Trinity United Methodist Church, Elkhart, \$26,030
Mark O. Fenstermacher

Zion United Church of Christ, Indianapolis, \$48,439
Beverly S. Kahle