



(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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For Immediate Release  
August 17, 2011

## **Lilly Endowment announces Indiana clergy renewal program for 2012**

By now, most of the 27 Indiana congregations that received clergy renewal grants last year have welcomed their pastors home, and the 19 that received grants this year are preparing to send their ministers out on journeys of discovery and renewal. The same opportunities await pastors and parishioners next year: 2012 will mark the 14<sup>th</sup> year for the Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations, funded by Lilly Endowment Inc.

Through this initiative the Endowment offers grants of up to \$50,000 each to support renewal programs for pastors of Indiana congregations. Up to \$15,000 of that amount may be used to help the congregation fulfill pastoral duties during the pastor's absence and/or to support renewal activities for the congregation itself.

The Endowment seeks both to honor the important work that congregations do and to provide their pastors and their families a special opportunity to engage in an extended period of intentional refreshment and renewal. "Pastoral ministry," said Craig Dykstra, the Endowment's senior vice president for religion, "is a demanding vocation. Done well, it draws deeply upon the pastor's heart, mind, strength and soul. Well-planned clergy renewal programs provide pastors both time they need to stand back from their daily responsibilities and a chance to engage in what many previous grantees have described as 'life changing experiences' that connect them more deeply to the spiritual resources on which their ministries depend."

"With these grants," he said, "pastors travel to places throughout the world, explore the historical traditions of their denominations, renew family and friendship ties, read, write, worship and pray – whatever helps them draw more deeply on the sources of renewal that give them energy and sustain them in their ministries.

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“These are intentional times of replenishment,” Dykstra stressed. “They are not vacations. Successful proposals combine a sense of coherence among the proposed activities, usually drawn together in a thematic unity that is apparent in the proposal. This is not a fill-in-the-blanks application. It takes time for the pastor and congregation to put together a well-thought-out plan. Among the proposals there is a great deal of variety, but the point is always renewal – of body, mind and spirit – in the deepest possible sense.”

One pastor echoed Dykstra’s statement. “The most prevalent impact on the congregation was that we bonded beyond any expectations we could have had. By working together and intentionally putting God and the church first, we grew as one and accomplished things that we were not sure were possible,” he said.

The program is open to all Indiana congregations that have an ordained pastor. Also, if a pastor has benefited from a previous clergy renewal program grant received in or before 2003, that pastor’s current congregation is eligible to apply for a grant to support a second renewal for that pastor. Applications must be postmarked by March 12, 2012, and recipients will be notified by late June 2012.

**An information meeting about the program for Indiana pastors, their spouses and congregational representatives will be held Sept. 27 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at North United Methodist Church, 3808 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis.**

For details about the information meeting or to gain access to the application brochure, interested persons should view the Endowment’s website, [lillyendowment.org](http://lillyendowment.org), and click on Religion; call 317/916-7350; email [indianaclergyrenewal@yahoo.com](mailto:indianaclergyrenewal@yahoo.com); or write Jean M. Smith, Program Director, Lilly Endowment, 2801 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, Ind. 46208.