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Lilly Endowment announces 2001 class of National Clergy Renewal Program recipients

Some ministers lead congregations whose numbers don't reach 100; others count thousands on their membership rolls. Some preside over downtown churches that have been there a long time, while others lead homegrown suburban churches or congregations that anchor small towns and rural communities. Some of the ministers are concerned with aging congregations, others with new members speaking different languages.

All are represented among the 129 congregations in 38 states that have been selected to receive grants of up to $30,000 through the National Clergy Renewal Program/2001 of Lilly Endowment Inc.

For the second year, the Indianapolis-based Endowment has selected congregations and their ministers from hundreds of applications – all proposing programs of renewal and refreshment on both sides of the pulpit.

There are as many stories as sabbaticals. The ministers are taking advantage of the opportunity by planning trips all over the world from the Holy Land to Ecuador,

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attending conferences, "digging in the earth," reconnecting with friends from years past, sorting out genealogies, writing hymns and books, spending time in reflection, and enjoying time with their families.

Some have chosen symbolic themes for their renewal programs – food, water, the desert. All have crafted intentional and well thought-out programs that they believe will refresh their spirits and re-energize themselves and their congregations.

Cindy Weber, pastor for 17 years at the Jeff Street Baptist Community at Liberty in Louisville, Ky., chose the theme of "dancing for the duration." A small, culturally diverse, inner-city congregation, Jeff Street is in direct contact with human needs – the homeless, mentally ill, chemically dependent and poor. The church members do their best, but it takes a toll.

They hope their program will allow Weber to "find new partners, sit one out, learn to dance solo and learn new steps." She plans a trip to the Iona community in Scotland, time "doing nothing" with her family in the Outer Hebrides, going on two solitary retreats and attending a workshop on the "long pastorate."

Harold T. Lewis is pastor of Pittsburgh's 146-year-old Calvary Episcopal Church, the first African American to hold the post in the history of the parish. A nationally recognized preacher, author and scholar, Lewis will head for South Africa where he will teach in the Theological Convocation of the Diocese of Cape Town. Faculty members there include the Most Rev. Desmond Tutu, former archbishop of Cape Town and Nobel Peace Prize laureate of 1984. The last month of Lewis's sabbatical will find him in Birmingham, England, where he received his Ph.D. in 1994. The overall purpose of his program is to bridge theology and service.

Huu Phu Nguyen, pastor of the Vietnamese New Hope Christian Reformed Church in Winfield, Ill., sees a need for him to be the "connector" between his congregation and churches in Vietnam. (More than 60 families in Vietnam have relatives in this church.) For nine years, the responsibilities of starting a new church and of

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keeping up with a congregation of immigrant refugees have been many. He welcomes newcomers at airports and helps them each step along their new way in America.

For his sabbatical, he and his wife, Nhuyen Le, will go to Saigon, Hue and Hanoi – the three largest urban areas in Vietnam – and visit "house churches" and their pastors and members in each area. He will talk about the United States, the growth of Vietnamese churches here, and the challenges and successes of immigrants to this country.

"Too few people appreciate the demands made on their ministers, who are called upon for guidance, spiritual direction, sound preaching and teaching, confident leadership in worship, administrative excellence, inspirational community building and effective fund-raising," said Craig Dykstra, Endowment vice president for religion.

"They are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Too often, they tell us, they get caught up in the 'busy-ness' of their lives. So, they can use a little help from us as they search for ways to build into their schedules time for personal prayer, reflection and 'sabbath rest.' They know that, unless they do, today's hectic pace will affect their health and the well-being of their congregations," he said.

It was with this concern in mind that the Endowment last year named the first group of National Clergy Renewal Program recipients – 118 congregations. "In the intervening months, we have heard what we hoped we would, that the ministers and congregations are more joyful, enthusiastic and 'centered' than they were before the program," Dykstra said.

Thirty-three women, 95 men and two husband-and-wife teams make up the "class of 2001," most of whom will take their sabbaticals next year.

Usually lasting three to four months, the renewal periods are planned by the pastor and the congregation together. The congregation needs to "step up to the plate" to make arrangements for church activities while its pastor is gone. They also need to think

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with the pastor about how renewal opportunities of this kind can best be used to sustain good ministry over the long haul. All these congregations are more than willing to do both.

"We have found," Dykstra noted, "that the congregations anticipate the sabbatical with as much energy as the pastor. They often take on duties and projects that had previously been left to the pastor, and in so doing, they build their own sense of accomplishment and 'ownership' of the activity.

"We are concerned about the health and vitality of American congregations," he said. "We would like them to be places of vibrant worship, clear purpose and hospitable care and welcome. For this to happen, we need good ministers. So the Endowment is eager also to support practicing ministers in their good work and to encourage talented young people to consider this profession for their own lives.

"The issues of good ministry and healthy congregations intertwine and intersect. Both exist in a fast-changing world that is constantly challenging. We think this clergy renewal program both benefits and honors pastors and congregations who are doing their important work well," he said.

Under the program, any Christian congregation in 49 states may request up to a total of $30,000 (the Endowment funds a separate program for Indiana congregations). Up to $10,000 of the $30,000 may be used for congregational expenses associated with the renewal program; the remainder may be used for the pastor's program expenses.

The total grant amount in this round of the National Clergy Renewal Program is $3.2 million.

Plans and application procedures for the 2002 National Clergy Renewal Program will be announced in a few weeks.

One of the country's largest private philanthropic foundations, Lilly Endowment was established in 1937 and honors its founders wishes by supporting the causes of religion, community development and education.

**See following pages for recipients of grants
in the National Clergy Renewal Program/2001**

National Clergy Renewal Program/2001

129 grants

Arizona

Phoenix – First Institutional Baptist Church (American Baptist), $27,261
Warren H. Stewart Jr.

Arkansas

Little Rock – Westover Hills Presbyterian Church, $23,699
James D. Freeman

California

Alameda – First Baptist Church (American Baptist), $26,816
Clark Flesher

El Cerrito – Christ Lutheran Church (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, ELCA), $24,015
Sharon D. Lubkeman

Long Beach – Wesley United Methodist Church, $26,740
Cherrye A. Ross Cunnigan

North Highlands – St. Stephens Presbyterian Church, $26,905
Margaret E. Cross

Novato – Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (ELCA), $30,000
Paul J. Gravrock

Pasadena – Pasadena Mennonite Church, $27,397
James E. Brenneman

Placerville – El Dorado County Federated Church (United Methodist Church/Presbyterian), $28,740
Sandra L. Peirce

Roseville – East Parkway Bible Church (Wesleyan), $27,450
William E. Steen Jr.

Colorado

Arvada – Arvada Presbyterian Church, $25,000
Stanley E. Jewell

Boulder – First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), $24,292
Terry L. Zimmerman

Colorado Springs – Bethel Lutheran Church (ELCA), $26,690
John D. Soreson

Colorado Springs – Beth-El Mennonite Church, $28,154
Mervin R. Birky

Denver – Trinity United Methodist Church, $14,731
Darrell E. Mount

Highlands Ranch – Christ Lutheran Church (ELCA), $25,715
David J. Jensen

Louisville – Christ the Servant Lutheran Church (ELCA), $23,384
Daniel M. Hoeger

Connecticut

Niantic – Niantic Community Church (United Church of Christ/United Methodist Church, Federated), $24,177
Robert A. Moore

West Hartford – St. John's Church (Episcopal), $27,500
Joseph L. Pace

Florida

Tallahassee – Celebration Baptist Church (Florida Baptist Convention), $29,900
Jerry B. Garrard

Georgia

Athens – St. Gregory's Episcopal Church, $23,202
Granville Porter Taylor

Snellville – Presbyterian Church of the Redeemer, $15,650
John S. Byerly

Illinois

Belleville – Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church (Lutheran Church/Missouri Synod, LC/MS), $29,980
Gary W. Byers

Chicago – Chicago Fellowship of Friends, $29,650
Steve and Marlene Pedigo

Chicago – Progressive Community Center (International Council of Community Churches), $30,000
B. Herbert Martin Sr.

Deerfield – Congregational Church (United Church of Christ), $29,980
Blair A. Hull-Curtwright

Evanston – First United Methodist Church, $23,444
Dean L. Francis

Evanston – St. Mark's Episcopal Church, $30,000
Thomas G. Hunt Scott

Glencoe – Church of St. Elisabeth (Episcopal), $30,000
Philip H. and Polly Kasey

Joliet – St. John First English Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA), $27,070
Peter M. Holmer

Libertyville – Holy Cross Lutheran Church (ELCA), $28,273
Robert A. Davis

Richmond – Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA), $24,700
Terry A. Dufur

St. Charles – Hosanna! Lutheran Church (ELCA), $20,005
John P. Nelson

Winfield – Vietnamese New Hope Church (Christian Reformed Church), $17,810
Huu Phu Nguyen

Iowa

Ames – United Church of Christ, $25,495
Doyle S. McDuff III

Grinnell – United Church of Christ-Congregational, $16,941
Robert F. Molsberry

(**Iowa**, continued)

Salem – Salem Monthly Meeting of Friends, $30,000
Thomas A. Palmer

Kansas

Olathe – First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), $29,862
David B. Merrick

Overland Park – Blue Valley Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), $16,000
Richard E. Butler

Topeka – Gage Park Baptist Church (American Baptist), $17,260
Robert L. Roesler

Kentucky

Lexington – Christ Church Cathedral (Episcopal), $28,160
Russell L. Johnson

Louisville – Jeff Street Baptist Community Church (Alliance of Baptists), $29,593
Cindy J. Weber

Louisiana

Paulina – St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, $20,400
Frank M. Uter

Maine

Norway – First Universalist Church, $18,458
Joy D. Gasta

Maryland

Baltimore – Amazing Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA), $25,426
Karen L. Brau

Federalsburg – Federalsburg-Denton Charge (United Methodist Church), $20,020
Vanessa Stephens Lee

Lexington Park – Episcopal Church of the Ascension, $28,766
Rona R. Harding

Walkersville – Glade United Church of Christ, $28,644
Gerald C. Hanberry

Massachusetts

Arlington – Church of Our Saviour (Episcopal), $27,269
Linda Fisher Privitera

Cambridge – University Lutheran Association of Greater Boston (ELCA), $30,000
Joanne E. Engquist

Marion – Community Baptist Church (American Baptist), $30,000
Robert J. Gomes

Westborough – Unitarian Universalist Congregational Society, $29,000
Cynthia A. Frado

Michigan

Ann Arbor – St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, $29,500
James G. McDougall

Freeport – Hope Church of the Brethren, $29,981
Douglas A. Reichenbach

Grand Rapids – East Congregational Church (United Church of Christ), $30,000
Sarah Campbell

Hancock – Gloria Dei Lutheran Church (ELCA), $29,233
Jimalee M. Jones

Holland – Harderwyk Christian Reformed Church, $30,000
Wayne Brouwer

Ravenna – St. Catherine Catholic Church, $30,000
John F. Porter

Traverse City – Fellowship Church (Christian Reformed Church), $22,236
Jon DeBruyn

Minnesota

Duluth – Kenwood Lutheran Church (ELCA), $15,086
Bradley C. Jenson

Minneapolis – St. Peder's Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA), $17,600
Robert H. Albing

Mississippi

Gulfport – Mississippi City United Methodist Church, $27,825
Roderick E. Dickson-Rishel

Missouri

Blue Springs – First United Methodist Church, $24,900
Stephen L. Cox

Kansas City – Country Club Christian Church, $22,712
Carla R. Aday

Kansas City – Hope Fellowship Baptist Church (North American Baptist Conference), $27,574
Dennis D. Dewey

Kansas City – St. Monica Catholic Church, $24,661
Philip M. Egan

Montana

Libby – Christ Lutheran Church (ELCA), $23,460
Leslie M. Nelson

Missoula – First Presbyterian Church, $30,000
Eric O. Jacobsen

Nebraska

Curtis – Vineyard Christian Fellowship Church, $9,975
Allen D. Hodges

New Hampshire

Concord – East Congregational Church (United Church of Christ), $24,454
Patricia A. Dubois

Lee – Lee Church Congregational (United Church of Christ), $26,229
Daniel B. Randall

New Jersey

Summit – Christ Church (American Baptist/United Church of Christ, Federated), $20,600
Charles T. Rush Jr.

New York

Bronx – Baek-Min Presbyterian Church, $29,550
Ki Bong Kang

Clifton Park – St. George's Parish (Episcopal), $25,619
William R. Hinrichs

New York – Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, $21,390
Gregory S. Cootsona

Schuylerville – Old Saratoga Reformed Church, $12,240
Joyce Borgman deVelder

North Carolina

Asheville – First Presbyterian Church, $22,820
Elizabeth S. Duttera

Lincolnton – Emmanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA), $21,266
Gary A. Dittman

Salisbury – St. John's Lutheran Church (ELCA), $30,000
Carl R. Sachtleben

Ohio

Cincinnati – Carmel Presbyterian Church, $27,444
Clarence S. Wallace

Columbus – First Community Church (United Church of Christ), $29,650
Richard A. Wing

Lakewood – Trinity Lutheran Church (ELCA), $27,799
Paula Maeder Connor

Toledo – Washington Congregational United Church of Christ, $9,704
Donald W. Fothergill

Westlake – Church of the Redeemer United Church of Christ, $28,775
Michael P. Moore

Oklahoma

Bartlesville – Disciples Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), $28,010
Sharon E. Watkins

Tulsa – Bethany Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), $17,214
Barney R. McLaughlin III

Tulsa – St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, $13,450
Gail D. Kenney-Mulligan

Oregon

Eugene – Valley Covenant Church (Evangelical Covenant), $30,000
Stephen S. Bilynskyj

Jacksonville – First Presbyterian Church, $30,000
Lawrence E. Jung

Pennsylvania

Akron – Akron Mennonite Church, $14,150
Dawn Yoder Harms

Lancaster – First United Methodist Church, $14,000
Kent E. Kroehler

Lower Burrell – Trinity United Christian Church of New Kensington, $29,990
Larry O. Toney

Mechanicsburg – St. James Presbyterian Church, $27,970
James A. Reitz

Pittsburgh – Calvary Episcopal Church, $29,824
Harold T. Lewis

Pittsburgh – Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church, $27,816
Johnnie Monroe

Sayre – Sayre Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), $28,110
James D. Donahoo

State College – State College Presbyterian Church, $26,885
Joel T. Blunk

Worcester – Central Schwenkfelder Church, $10,280
Karen Kriebel Gallagher

South Carolina

Fort Mill – Unity Presbyterian Church, $12,980
Paula J. Brown Bickett

Tennessee

Knoxville – Church of the Savior (United Church of Christ), $26,235
John B. Gill

Knoxville – Mount Zion Baptist Church (Progressive Baptist Convention), $26,062
Johnnie W. Skinner Sr.

Nashville – Fifteenth Avenue Baptist Church (National Baptist Convention, USA), $24,571
William F. Buchanan

Texas

College Station – Friends Congregational Church (United Church of Christ), $15,402
Jo G. Hudson

Dallas – First Community Church (United Church of Christ), $22,088
Harry E. Middleton Jr.

Mathis – Sacred Heart Church (Catholic), $16,522
Jose A. Salazar

Midland – Our Savior's Lutheran Church (Independent Lutheran), $28,050
Robert M. Walter

Pearland – First Presbyterian Church, $27,554
Winfield R. (Casey) Jones

Tyler – Grace Community Church, $13,710
Gary E. Brandenburg

Utah

Ogden – St. Joseph's Catholic Church, $21,791
Colin F. Birchumshaw

Virginia

Arlington – St. Mary's Episcopal Church, $26,013
Andrew T.P. Merrow

Blacksburg – Christ Church Episcopal, $17,825
Clare Fischer-Davies

Blacksburg – Glade Baptist Church (Alliance of Baptists), $29,792
Kelly M. Sisson

Charlottesville – Trinity Episcopal Church, $25,840
Melana Nelson-Amaker

Harrisonburg – Trinity Presbyterian Church, $22,915
Ann Reed Held

Portsmouth – Simonsdale Presbyterian Church, $18,145
William P. Matthews Jr.

Springfield – St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, $27,669
Susan E. Goff

Washington

Bainbridge Island – Bethany Lutheran Church (ELCA), $19,925
Martin P. Dasler

Issaquah – Community Baptist Church of Issaquah (American Baptist), $26,213
Michael J. Burr

Mercer Island – Island Covenant Church (Evangelical Covenant), $27,750
Eric N. Newberg

Mill Creek – North Creek United Presbyterian Church, $28,375
Paul Strawn

Spokane – Redeemer Lutheran Church (LC/MS), $29,920
Philip E. Streufert

West Virginia

Charleston – St. John's Episcopal Church, $28,240
Karl D. Ruttan

St. Marys – St. John Catholic Church, $20,300
Thomas Karachira

Wisconsin

Milwaukee – Congregation of Prince of Peace/Principe de Paz Catholic Church, $24,910
James L. Dammeir

New Berlin – Our Lord's United Methodist Church, $24,890
Ronald D. Retherford

Oshkosh – First Congregational Church (United Church of Christ), $23,395
Ralph M. DiBiasio-Snyder

Plymouth – Immanuel United Church of Christ, $21,995
Wayne C. Drueck

Thiensville – Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA), $15,950
Delbert E. Sailer

Wyoming

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (ELCA), $19,530
Paul K. Erbes