



## **THRIVING IN MINISTRY INITIATIVE 2018**

### **Request for Proposals**

Lilly Endowment is pleased to announce its **Thriving in Ministry Initiative 2018**. Through this endeavor, the Endowment seeks to support charitable organizations (especially organizations committed to the support of pastoral leaders in congregations) located in the United States in developing new or strengthening existing programs that help pastors build relationships with experienced clergy who can serve as role models and exemplars and guide them through key leadership challenges at critical moments in their ministerial careers. The primary aim is to help pastors thrive in congregational leadership and thus enhance the vitality of the congregations they serve.

Interested charitable organizations may submit proposals for up to **\$1 million** that may be used for up to a five-year period to plan and implement programs that advance the aim described above. While the Endowment is interested in supporting a variety of approaches, it is especially interested in supporting efforts that: 1) attend to key professional transitions in a pastor's career and/or 2) focus on challenges posed by particular ministry contexts and settings. A full description of the Thriving in Ministry Initiative's aim and proposal guidelines is provided below.

In this open and competitive grants initiative, the Endowment anticipates awarding approximately **30 grants** to charitable organizations that submit exceptionally promising and compelling proposals that advance the aim of the initiative and demonstrate the capacity of the organization to design, implement and sustain a high-quality program. Proposals must be postmarked by **June 1, 2018**. The Endowment anticipates announcing grant awards in October 2018.

### **Enhancing the Conditions for Thriving in Ministry**

What enables pastors to thrive as pastoral leaders and thus lead congregations effectively? What common professional and personal challenges emerge along a pastor's ministerial career and present obstacles that impair his or her ability to lead well? What particular professional challenges confront pastors who serve in specific ministry settings? What wisdom from experienced clergy can help pastors negotiate these challenges? These questions are at the center of the Thriving in Ministry Initiative.

For the last 20 years, Lilly Endowment has supported efforts to strengthen the quality of pastoral leadership for Christian congregations. These efforts stand on the conviction that strong religious communities are essential to a flourishing and humane society. Furthermore, they are based on

the conviction that the congregation is the most fundamental form of Christian community. In local congregations Christians gather regularly for worship, extend care to one another, teach the meaning and practices of faith, find inspiration for daily life, and share God's love with each other and neighbors. An essential element of congregational vitality is capable pastors who are well-equipped to lead local faith communities.

To strengthen pastoral leadership, the Endowment has focused on supporting efforts that promote excellence at key moments along the arc of a pastor's ministerial career. These efforts include encouraging religious organizations to: 1) inspire young people to explore calls into Christian ministry and cultivate a new generation of pastors; 2) educate and prepare seminarians to lead Christian congregations; 3) help new pastors make the transition from student to pastoral leader; and 4) foster and sustain excellence in pastoral leadership for clergy serving in congregations. In addition, Endowment-supported initiatives have helped religious organizations address key barriers, such as excessive educational debt, that impair the ability of pastors to lead congregations effectively.

Since 1998, the Endowment has launched a series of initiatives to support pastors. For example, through the *Transition-Into-Ministry Initiative*, organizations created and sustained programs to help new pastors as they transition from seminary into full-time pastoral leadership. Organizations receiving grants in the *Sustaining Pastoral Excellence* initiative created peer groups for pastors to gather together regularly for biblical study, theological reflection, spiritual renewal and mutual support. *Lilly Endowment's Indiana and National Clergy Renewal Programs*, administered by Christian Theological Seminary, provide grants to congregations to enable pastors to step away briefly from their daily responsibilities for a period of renewal and reflection on ministry. (See Appendix I for more information about these initiatives.)

Much has been learned through these initiatives about what promotes and sustains pastoral excellence. Key insights and discoveries include:

- *The importance of pastoral agency*: Many pastors report that they thrive in settings that foster opportunities and freedom to take personal responsibility for their own growth and development, particularly around efforts to sharpen the fundamental practices of ministry to a high level of competence. These pastors desire to take an active role in shaping the programs in which they become involved instead of receiving passively information at events planned and hosted by others.
- *The power of clergy peer groups*: In order to overcome their sense of personal and professional isolation, many pastors express a desire to develop sustainable friendships with colleagues. Clergy peer groups spur ongoing professional and spiritual growth, creativity, intellectual challenge and personal guidance and support.
- *The critical character of the first years in ministry*: The first years of pastoral leadership are critically important to develop habits and practices for ministry that carry through the pastor's whole career. It is largely through the daily practice of ministry that pastors hone an imagination with a particular way of perceiving, understanding and relating to the world

that involves substantive engagement with Scripture, theological traditions, human experience, congregational life and the larger world.

- *The importance of ongoing learning and opportunities for renewal:* Many pastors report the need for opportunities as individuals and with one another to step away for rest and reflection to gain perspective on their ministries and to renew their calls to congregation leadership.

Although the Endowment is pleased with what hundreds of organizations have accomplished through their grant-supported programs to strengthen pastoral leadership, it recognizes that the demands placed on pastors today and the conditions in which they carry out their ministries are changing rapidly. Describing these conditions, pastors note especially their experiences of professional isolation and the difficulty they encounter in finding and building relationships with experienced colleagues who could share with them accrued wisdom about the increasingly complex congregational and community contexts in which they serve. *A new wave of efforts is needed to strengthen and support pastors and foster the conditions necessary for their ministries to thrive – especially for pastors in the early stages of their ministerial careers.*

In order to help organizations support and strengthen pastoral leaders who are serving congregations within these changing conditions, the Endowment developed its new Thriving in Ministry Initiative. In 2017, the Endowment invited and awarded grants to 24 religious organizations to create and/or enhance programs that help pastors who are in the midst of significant professional and personal transitions build relationships with experienced clergy who can serve as exemplars and role models and who can guide them through key leadership challenges in their congregations during these transitional moments. Encouraged by the response in this initial invitational round of the initiative, the Endowment is now seeking to expand this endeavor through a second round of grants in the open and competitive Thriving in Ministry Initiative 2018.

### **The Characteristics of Flourishing Pastoral Leaders**

Recent studies have examined carefully the demands placed on pastoral leaders today. One of the most important is the ongoing Flourishing in Ministry research project, directed by Dr. Matt Bloom at the University of Notre Dame ([www.flourishing.nd.edu](http://www.flourishing.nd.edu)). Bloom and his research team have surveyed thousands of pastors across the United States and conducted extended narrative interviews with hundreds of clergy who serve congregations in many Christian denominations. Their research has enabled them to document common professional and personal challenges that most clergy face during their ministerial careers. When pastors are able to address these challenges adroitly, they thrive and their leadership in their congregations flourishes. When they fail, they stumble both personally and professionally and their leadership effectiveness is impaired. What are the differences between pastors who thrive and those who struggle?

According to Bloom and his research team, clergy who are flourishing as pastoral leaders share four common characteristics: 1) the pastor establishes a clear sense of his or her pastoral and professional identity; 2) there is an alignment between the pastor's gifts and skills and the demands and expectations of the local congregation he or she serves; 3) the pastor receives mutual respect

and support from clergy peers; and 4) the pastor has relationships with role models and exemplars who serve as mentors and who can guide him or her through common professional challenges and transitions. The last characteristic is particularly important.

In conducting the study, Bloom talked at length with dozens of pastors who are thriving. These pastors described diverse challenges that emerged during periods when they faced something new (e.g., moving from a suburban to an urban setting, shifting from an associate to a senior staff position, managing a first building campaign). These pastors could name colleagues who played pivotal roles in helping them understand the challenges they faced and in providing strategies for responding. More importantly, these colleagues often served as models of pastoral excellence and showed the pastors how to lead effectively. Thriving pastors readily talked about these kinds of mentoring relationships with respected clergy colleagues.

While Bloom's research charted the characteristics of flourishing pastoral leaders, it also discovered that too many clergy lack these kinds of mentoring relationships. The researchers found that those who struggled could not identify role models and experienced colleagues with whom they had established close relationships. Bloom concludes that the lack of availability of and access to exemplars and role models is one of the chief threats to the flourishing of pastoral leaders today. The research findings pose a critical question for organizations responsible for the care and support of pastoral leaders: What kinds of opportunities would help pastors find and build relationships with exemplars and role models and thus enhance the conditions needed for more pastors to flourish and lead congregations more effectively?

### **Helping Pastors Thrive**

The Endowment intends to support a variety of programs that strengthen relationships among clergy and sustain the conditions needed for them to thrive. While organizations are invited to submit proposals for wide ranging programs aimed at strengthening pastoral leaders in congregational settings, the Endowment is especially interested in programs that attend to key *professional transitions* within a pastor's career in ministry and/or leadership challenges faced by pastors who serve *specific constituencies* or in *particular ministry settings*.

#### *Professional Transitions*

As pastors move through their career, different types of support are necessary. New pastors often struggle to identify priorities among a myriad of possible tasks and responsibilities before them. Pastors with five to 10 years of experience often possess the resources to make ministerial decisions, but often second-guess themselves in the midst of those decisions. Seasoned pastors move with intuitive confidence between ministry activities but may seek renewed creativity and inspiration to sustain their ministry over time.

Building on these insights, the Endowment is interested in supporting programs that focus on *key professional transitions*. These may involve: 1) new pastors in their first three years of ministry beyond theological education; 2) early career pastors who demonstrate capacity to step into larger leadership roles in their congregation and community; 3) midcareer pastors either seeking renewal

of calling or moving to new congregational settings; and/or 4) late-career pastors anticipating retirement who desire to explore the best practices for finishing well. How might programs support these pastors?

Programs that attend to *key professional transitions* may include: 1) gathering new pastors in their first three years of ministry beyond theological education with experienced pastors for establishing spiritual disciplines and leadership practices for leading congregations effectively and for mutual encouragement; 2) convening early career pastors to engage in conversation with one another and with civic leaders to explore the roles that their churches can play in helping their communities flourish; 3) asking midcareer pastors seeking renewal of calling to identify and invite a younger colleague in ministry to participate in a pilgrimage or immersion experience that seeks to inspire pastoral imagination and creativity; and/or 4) facilitating a gathering for late-career pastors anticipating retirement to meet with one another regularly to explore the best practices for finishing well and reflect on their ongoing roles and vocations as religious leaders in retirement.

### *Particular Ministry Settings*

When pastors find themselves serving in new ministry settings and facing leadership challenges arising in that setting for the first time, they often discover that assumptions and leadership skills they honed in prior settings are no longer applicable or effective. They seek wisdom and imagination from experienced colleagues to help them understand their new situations and to adjust their pastoral ministry practices accordingly.

The Endowment is interested in supporting programs that help pastors gain greater clarity about their *particular ministry settings*. These programs may involve: 1) church planters in their inaugural period of ministry; 2) women clergy stepping into senior leadership in multistaff settings; 3) pastors serving multilingual or multiethnic churches; or 4) pastors moving into urban or rural or other ministry settings for the first time. What programs might support these pastors?

Examples of programs that may attend to the leadership challenges faced by pastors who *serve specific constituencies* or *in particular ministry settings* may include: 1) hosting multiple retreats for pastors who are church planters in their inaugural period of ministry that include opportunities to visit one another's ministry sites and the ministry sites of more experienced church planters; 2) creating peer groups for women clergy stepping into senior leadership in multistaff settings to meet regularly with different types of experienced senior pastors in order to explore leadership styles and habits and practices of congregational ministry; 3) inviting pastors serving multilingual or multiethnic churches to regular retreats and workshops to work together with faculty in theological schools to curate and create the worship and educational resources needed to support emerging ministries and their congregational leaders; or 4) facilitating connections and relationships for pastors moving into urban or rural settings for the first time with key community organizations and institutional leaders.

In addition to the examples above, the Endowment funded a variety of programs in 2017 through its initial invitational round of its Thriving in Ministry Initiative. After listening to pastors for whom they are responsible or associated, some of these organizations created programs to support a key moment in a pastor's ministerial career and others focused on pastors serving in particular

settings. Many developed programs that address both. For instance, one program will connect candidates for ordained ministry with mentor-pastors as these candidates move through the candidacy process and transition into their first pastorate. Another will create mission immersion experiences for midcareer pastors to help them foster life-giving and mutually enriching relationships with each other and reinvigorate their passion for ministry by building relationships with mission communities. One program will gather clergywomen from different denominations for a series of retreats that include learning, prayer and spiritual mentoring to reflect on the unique challenges encountered by women leading congregations. Another program will create a network of pastors serving in economically distressed communities that seeks to foster a professional learning community through project based learning, peer-learning workshops and mentoring. One program will bring together Latino/a clergy who are in the early stages of their careers with pastor-mentors to reflect on effective practices of pastoral leadership in churches within communities experiencing demographic transition. A final example is a program that will establish peer groups for pastors serving congregations in rural and urban areas for the first time to provide them with coaching, mentoring and spiritual direction from seasoned pastors as well as connect them with organizations that are creating new and innovative models of ministry.

These examples are intended to be suggestive only. Each organization should consider carefully the characteristics of thriving clergy described above, examine common challenges faced by clergy who are part of the organization's constituency, assess its own organizational capacities, and design a program that is appropriate to its own mission, capacity and context.

### **New Models for Building and Sustaining Relationships**

While many seasoned and experienced pastors can name a mentor who guided them through ministerial challenges (especially in the early years of ministry), religious leaders report that traditional forms of one-on-one mentoring are often not available to many pastors. The implicit agreement between senior and junior colleagues that led to regular sharing of professional knowledge and practice has disappeared due to increasing mobility, frequent transitions and changing demographics within the workforce. Experienced pastors are less available and less accessible to younger pastors. Yet, as is the case in other professions as well, young clergy are eager to connect and converse with wise colleagues whom they respect. Where more traditional models of mentoring are not working, clergy are seeking out opportunities to engage a variety of role models, exemplars and mentors in order to learn the practices of ministry.

The Endowment encourages organizations to propose programs that develop and test new patterns and practices for clergy to build and sustain collegial relationships with each other (especially new models that push beyond traditional one-on-one, mentor-mentee relationships). These models may include helping clergy develop relationships with multiple colleagues (both peers and experienced clergy) in group settings that provide them with opportunities to learn from different colleagues who appear most knowledgeable about specific situations or challenges. Other forms may include mentoring relationships that are shorter in duration, potentially virtual, and/or networked relationships among intergenerational groups of clergy who are at different stages of their ministerial careers.

## Eligibility and Selection Criteria

Charitable organizations [with Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3) and public charity status] committed to supporting pastoral leaders are invited to submit proposals of up to **\$1 million** each that may be used for up to a five-year period. Grant funds may be used to develop new or strengthen existing programs that help pastors build relationship with experienced clergy who can serve as role models and exemplars and guide them through key leadership challenges at critical moments in their ministerial careers. The Endowment especially encourages efforts that: 1) attend to key professional transitions in a pastor's career and/or 2) focus on challenges posed by particular ministry contexts and settings. Grant funds may be used to fund the programmatic costs of developing a new or enhanced program. The funds may not be used for capital expenses or endowment.

The Endowment encourages applicants to apply for an amount appropriate to the organization's capacity, proposed program need and ability to sustain its program after the grant period. These are intended to be one-time grant awards. If successful, organizations are expected to continue the program beyond the grant period from other funding sources.

The Endowment will review the proposals and award grants on a competitive basis to organizations that submit complete proposals demonstrating that they have the capacity to design, implement and sustain a high-quality program that advances the aim described above. Funding decisions will be based on the following criteria: 1) the clarity of the program's purpose to strengthen pastoral leadership and help pastors thrive in leading congregations; 2) the quality of design of the proposed program and its potential to advance the initiative's aims; 3) the capacity, readiness and appropriateness of the organization to develop a new and/or enhance an existing program; 4) the reach of the program and its potential positive impact on significant numbers of pastors; and 5) a clear commitment and capacity of the organization to garner the financial resources needed to sustain its program beyond the grant period.

## Application Procedures

Interested organizations are asked to follow the application procedure and timeline described below.

- (1) **Complete an Interest Form** and send to Lilly Endowment by **April 6, 2018**. This form (available on website link below) indicates interest in developing a proposal and names a key contact person involved in this effort.
- (2) **Submit a complete proposal** to Lilly Endowment postmarked by **June 1, 2018**.
- (3) Lilly Endowment anticipates notifying schools of funding decisions in **October 2018**.

Complete guidelines and application forms may be found at:

[www.lillyendowment.org/religion/thrivinginministry.html](http://www.lillyendowment.org/religion/thrivinginministry.html)

## Proposal Guidelines

A complete proposal will include the following:

- Official Request Letter
- Proposal Summary Information Form
- Proposal Narrative (up to 10 pages, single-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt.)
- Budget and Budget Narrative (see instructions)
- Accompanying Materials
  - Exempt Status and Foundation Status Information Form
  - Copy of Internal Revenue Service tax status determination letter
  - Current year operating budget
  - Letter(s) of Support (where applicable)

(1) Official Request Letter: The proposal must be accompanied by an official request letter signed by the applicant's president or chief executive officer and, where applicable, the chairperson of its governing board.

(2) Proposal Summary Information Form: This worksheet provides information about the program and the individuals who are responsible for overseeing a grant award.

(3) Proposal Narrative: The proposal narrative should address the topics and questions below and should not exceed **10 pages** in length, excluding budget and other supporting materials. (single-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt.)

A. Executive Summary – Begin with a one-paragraph executive summary that describes the applicant, the appropriateness of the proposed program's fit with the applicant's mission and the highlights of the proposed program. (Not included in page limit.)

B. Marks of Thriving in Ministry – Provide a full discussion of the applicant's understanding of the nature and purpose of pastoral ministry. What is the applicant's theological understanding of pastoral leadership? Drawing on this understanding, what are the marks of a thriving pastoral leader? What kinds of experiences and opportunities are most needed for pastors to thrive as pastoral leaders and thus lead congregations effectively?

C. Current State of Pastoral Ministry – Provide an analysis of the applicant's understanding of the current state of pastoral ministry. Based on research and on the day-to-day experience of pastors for whom the applicant is responsible or associated, what common professional and personal challenges emerge during key professional transitions in a minister's career and/or when serving specific constituencies or in particular ministry settings? What has the applicant learned about how pastors negotiate these challenges? What types of activities that support pastoral ministry need to be expanded? What is missing and needs to be created?

D. Program Purpose and Goals – State the proposed program's purpose and goals. What are the goals of the program? Who are the pastors this program will support? Will the program attend to key professional transitions in a pastor's career and/or focus on challenges posed

by particular ministry contexts and settings? How will the program strengthen collegial relationships among clergy? How does the program fit within the applicant's mission?

- E. Program Activities – Provide a detailed program design that relates clearly to the program's goals and budget. What are the program's key activities? How will these activities address the goals stated above? What are the program's content, format, and structure? What is the timeline for the program?
- F. Leadership – Identify key leaders for the program. What roles and responsibilities will they have in implementing this effort?
- G. Expected Outcomes – Clearly state the results for which the applicant expects to be held accountable. What are the expected short-term and long-term outcomes for the program? What are the expected outcomes for the pastors? What are the expected outcomes for the organization?
- H. Evaluation – Include an evaluation plan that describes the process by which the applicant's effectiveness in attaining its goals will be assessed. What would success look like for the program? What would be disappointing? What activities will be implemented to evaluate the program and mark its progress in advancing its goals? Who is responsible for collecting and analyzing this evidence?
- I. Sustainability and Continuation – Detail and prepare a future funding plan to sustain the program beyond the initial grant period. What sources of funding will be needed? How will new sources of funding be cultivated to replace grant dollars? How will other institutional and intellectual resources be secured and sustained? Who will oversee the long-term development and fundraising?
- J. Organizational capacity– Provide a brief description of the applicant, including its mission, organization structure (a profile of the board and how board members are recruited), relationship to a Christian denomination or tradition, annual operating budget and major sources of support. Include a short narrative that chronicles the applicant's decision to apply for this grant and describes the various participants involved in the planning process.

(4) Budget (See [www.lillyendowment.org/religion/thrivinginministry.html](http://www.lillyendowment.org/religion/thrivinginministry.html) for guidelines.)

Please prepare a budget and budget narrative for the activities described in the proposal narrative. (Budget documents are not included in the 10-page limit for the proposal narrative above.)

The Endowment encourages applicants to apply for an amount appropriate to the organization's capacity, proposed program need and ability to sustain after the grant period. In other words, an applicant may wish to consider applying for less than \$1 million if such an amount would better fit the organization's capacity.

- A. **Budget:** A detailed line-item budget should specify how grant funds will be used and should be submitted as a separate document. Please follow the “Guide for Budget Preparation” in preparing the budget, which can be found on the website link above. Please note that the budget categories are for illustrative purposes. The Endowment recommends that the applicant work closely with those responsible for accounting procedures and financial policies in the organization to create a budget that fits within the organization’s chart of accounts.

**Budget Summary:** If the budget is more than one page, please prepare a one-page budget summary, condensing the line items into larger categories, according to the guidelines.

- B. **Budget Narrative:** A budget narrative describes the calculations for each line item in the grant budget.

- (5) Accompanying Materials (See [www.lillyendowment.org/religion/thrivinginministry.html](http://www.lillyendowment.org/religion/thrivinginministry.html) for forms.)

In addition to the proposal narrative and budget, a complete proposal should include the following materials. (Not included in page limit.)

- A. **Exempt Status and Foundation Status Information Form:** A completed form should be enclosed with the proposal. This form is used to verify the charitable organizations’ tax status.
- B. **Copy of Internal Revenue Service tax status determination letter:** Please also include a copy of the organization’s Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax-exempt status determination letter. This letter provides verification of the applicant’s status as a 501(c)(3) organization. Please note: many congregations or judicatory-related organizations may not have asked for or received such a letter from the IRS. If that is the case, determine whether the congregation is listed in a group exemption ruling for the denomination. If so, please attach evidence that the congregation is covered by the ruling (for example, by sending copies of the directory cover and the page on which the congregation is listed in the official directory of your denomination). No grants will be awarded until the proper tax status is confirmed.
- C. **Current year operating budget:** A copy of the applicant’s operating budget for the current year.
- D. **Letter(s) of Support** (where applicable): If the proposed program involves cooperation with other organizations, letters of support from the leaders of the other organizations or agencies should be submitted with the application.

## **Proposal Submission Guidelines**

Lilly Endowment requests the submission of **one (1) unbound, single-sided copy** of the grant proposal and accompanying materials **through regular mail or special delivery**.

Note: Please ***do not*** use paper clips, binder clips, staples or enclose proposal documents in binders, especially those that are difficult to remove or that require making holes in the documents.

In addition, please **email one copy** of the full proposal as a PDF in the order listed below to [thrivinginministry@lei.org](mailto:thrivinginministry@lei.org).

## **Proposal Deadline and Checklist**

Proposals must be postmarked no later than **June 1, 2018**.

*A complete proposal should include the following items in this order:*

- Physical copy** – one (1) unbound, single-sided copy sent by mail
  - Official Request Letter
  - Proposal Summary Information Form
  - Proposal Narrative (up to 10 pages single-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt.)
  - Budget (detailed line-item) and Budget Narrative
    - Budget Summary (if detailed line-item budget is longer than one page)
  - Accompanying Materials
    - Exempt Status and Foundation Status Form
    - Internal Revenue Service exempt status determination letter
    - Current year operating budget
    - Letters of Support (where applicable)

*In addition, please email the proposal to [thrivinginministry@lei.org](mailto:thrivinginministry@lei.org):*

- Email copy** - full proposal as a PDF in the order listed above by **June 1, 2018**

### **Grant Proposals and Inquiries Should Be Directed To:**

Jessica Krey Duckworth  
Program Director, Religion  
Lilly Endowment Inc.  
2801 North Meridian Street  
P.O. Box 88068  
Indianapolis, IN 46208  
[thrivinginministry@lei.org](mailto:thrivinginministry@lei.org)

## APPENDIX I

### *Previous Lilly Endowment Initiatives to Strengthen Pastoral Leadership*

Since 1998, Lilly Endowment has launched a series of strategic initiatives aimed at strengthening the capacities of pastoral leaders.

Beginning in 1998, the Endowment's **Transition-Into-Ministry Initiative** awarded grants in a 10-year period to 39 organizations to create programs aimed at assisting new pastors in making the critical transition from seminary student to full-time pastor. The majority of programs funded were congregation-based residency programs in which, like the medical school residency model, new pastors spend time as "residents" within a congregation before assuming leadership of their own church. Other peer-based programs, organized and implemented by regional and national judicatories, theological schools and faith-based agencies, created mentoring groups for new pastors and strengthened support networks for clergy serving their first congregations.

Since 1998, **Lilly Endowment's Indiana and National Clergy Renewal Programs, which are now administered by Christian Theological Seminary**, have awarded grants to more than 2,600 congregations to provide an opportunity for pastors to step away briefly from the persistent obligations of daily congregational life and to engage in a period of renewal and reflection.

In 2002, the Endowment launched its **Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Initiative**, which awarded grants to 63 organizations to create or strengthen programs to promote and sustain excellence in pastoral leadership. The largest number of programs were built around "peer group" learning, convening small groups or cohorts of pastors who gather together regularly for several years for ongoing education, professional development, renewal and mutual support.

Beginning in 2007, the Endowment awarded grants to 17 organizations in its **Early Career Pastoral Leadership Development Programs initiative** to help pastors explore the roles that their churches can play in helping their communities flourish. These programs gather groups of early career pastors with five to 10 years of ministerial experience regularly for two years and engage them in conversation with civic leaders and policy-makers about major challenges facing their regions.

Beginning in 2012, the Endowment awarded grants to 19 theological schools in its **Initiative to Strengthen the Quality of Preaching** to design and launch preaching programs that help working pastors enhance their preaching skills through peer learning and help seminary students through educational programs that seek to improve preaching instruction. In addition, the initiative seeks to make more accessible high-quality Web-based sermon preparation resources.

Since 2015, the Endowment awarded grants to 38 religious organizations in its **National Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Pastoral Leaders** to reduce or alleviate some of the key financial pressures that impair effective pastoral leadership and improve financial literacy among parish pastors.

In 2017, the Endowment awarded grants to 24 religious organizations in the first round of its **Thriving in Ministry Initiative** to create and/or enhance programs that help clergy thrive in their roles as pastoral leaders and thus enhance the vitality of the congregations that they serve. The

Endowment encouraged organizations to focus especially on efforts designed for younger clergy and pastors who are in the midst of significant professional and personal transitions to help them build relationships with experienced clergy who can serve as exemplars and role models and who can guide them through key leadership challenges during these transitional moments.

## **APPENDIX II**

### *Selected Bibliography on Pastoral Ministry*

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