



(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 announces ninth year for Indiana clergy renewal program

Time to be alone, yet time to be with family. Time to “get grounded,” yet time to explore the unknown. For these reasons – and many others – pastors need time to get away for an extended period of renewal. Their many roles in church and community – pastor, civic leader, teacher, confidant, spiritual guide – require that they reflect deeply about the convictions and passions that led them to the ministry in the first place and that they continually imagine new ways to bear witness to the faith of their traditions in a changing culture.

Enter the Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations, which Lilly Endowment Inc. is funding again for 2007, the ninth year of the program. Through the program the Endowment offers congregations up to 40 grants of up to \$45,000 each to support a renewal program for their pastors. 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. So far more than 250 Indiana congregations have received clergy renewal grants.

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“Many people do not realize that good pastors are generally very busy people who perform many diverse duties,” said Craig Dykstra, the Endowment’s senior vice president for religion. “Most of them have never taken a sabbatical. These are not ‘burned-out’ pastors, but hard-working people whose duties have left them little time to stop – just stop – for a while. As one pastor told us after his sabbatical, ‘If you think you’re too busy to get away, you’re busier than you need to be. The renewal program can help you understand that.’”

Pastors use the time to travel to various parts of the world, renew ties with family and friends, explore a new interest or develop an old one, read and write, study other churches and missions.

“These are intentional times of getting away,” Dykstra notes. “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.”

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 2001, that pastor’s current congregation is eligible to apply for a grant to support a second renewal program for that pastor.

Applications must be postmarked by Jan. 30, 2007, and recipients will be notified by late May 2007.

An information meeting about the program for Indiana pastors, their spouses and congregational representatives will be held Sept. 28 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at North United Methodist Church, 3808 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Those who would like to attend should fill out the invitation card that accompanies the application (or that is available on the Endowment’s Web site) and return it to the Endowment by Sept. 21.

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For details about the information meeting or to gain access to the application brochure, interested persons should view the Endowment's Web site, www.lillyendowment.org, and click on Religion; call 317/916-7350; e-mail indianaclergyrenewal@yahoo.com; or write Jean M. Smith, Program Director, Lilly Endowment, 2801 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, Ind. 46208.

(The Endowment also supports the National Clergy Renewal Program, which includes congregations and pastors in the other 49 states.)