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## Lilly Endowment embarks on National Clergy Renewal Program to support pastors and congregations

Up to 100 congregations and their pastors from all across the country will have an opportunity to participate in the National Clergy Renewal Program, funded by the Indianapolis-based Lilly Endowment Inc.

Expanding nationwide a program begun in Indiana in 1998, the Endowment hopes to attract the involvement of congregations whose pastors need time to step away from their many duties and enter a period of intentional reflection and renewal.

The National Clergy Renewal Program, a competitive program open to all Christian congregations whose ordained pastors have a master of divinity degree, takes countrywide a program which has been succeeding in Indiana.

“The reaction of congregations all across Indiana was so positive and encouraging that we decided to enlarge the program to cover the entire country,” said Craig Dykstra, Endowment vice president for religion.

“The Endowment cares deeply about the health and vitality of congregations,” Dykstra said in explaining the Endowment’s reasons for funding this program. “We seek both to honor the high calling of pastors who do a good job of serving their congregations and to provide opportunities for them to strengthen and renew themselves for their important and difficult work.”

(more)

National Clergy Renewal  
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Most pastors in the first “class” of recipients of grants in the Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations are currently making their plans for their times away from their pulpits, though four already have completed their renewal programs. In Indiana, 107 applications were received, and 23 congregations were selected. Applications for the second year of that program are due in mid-February. The Indiana program will continue to serve congregations in the state, so Indiana pastors will not be eligible for the national program.

Each congregation applying in the \$3 million national program may request up to a total of \$30,000 to support the renewal program. Up to \$10,000 of the total may be used by the congregation to fulfill pastoral functions in the pastor’s absence. Proposals must be postmarked by Aug. 1. They will be evaluated in terms of the renewal program’s feasibility, creativity and potential benefits to the congregations and pastor. The awards will be announced by December.

Materials describing the program and application procedures will be sent upon request. Interested persons may send an e-mail to [clergyrenewal@yahoo.com](mailto:clergyrenewal@yahoo.com), call 317/916-7302, or write Lilly Endowment at 2801 N. Meridian St., P.O. Box 88068, Indianapolis, Ind. 46208-0068.