

# More than 200 U.S. Congregations Receive Lilly Endowment 2023 Clergy Renewal Program Grants

*Christian Theological Seminary announces 229 congregations from across the United States receive grants through the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program.*

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA, UNITED STATES, December 7, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Christian Theological Seminary](#), an ecumenical seminary based in Indianapolis, today announces 229 congregations from



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*Christopher L. Coble, Vice President, Religion at Lilly Endowment*

across the United States have been selected to receive grants through the Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program and the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations. The grants help congregations honor and support their pastors by enabling them to engage in a period of extended rest and renewal. Recipients may use the respite for activities that encourage them to reflect and renew while engaging in activities such as travel, scholarly research, or immersive experiences with different cultures and traditions.

“Pastors play such important roles in nurturing the spiritual lives of individuals and families and guiding the ministries of congregations,” said Christopher L. Coble, Vice President for Religion at Lilly Endowment. “Yet the demands of ministry can seem relentless. We hope that these grants will help congregations honor their pastors for their extraordinary service and give them time to step away from their daily duties for rest and renewal.”

Congregations in the 2023 programs represent diverse Christian traditions, including Roman Catholic parishes and congregations from more than 28 Protestant denominations. Reflecting the collaborative nature of the grant programs, congregations and their pastors worked together to determine how the pastors will use the grants to replenish, restore, and renew their ministries.

Pastors also plan to use the awards to fund domestic and international travel. For example, one pastor will travel with family to South Korea for time with extended family there and make a pilgrimage to Jeju, exploring the spirituality of missions. Other pastors’ plans include traveling to

Santa Fe, New Mexico to visit galleries and take art classes; attending a high-energy fitness bootcamp; journeying to a Reggio Children International Study Group in Bologna, Italy to immerse in learning about the Reggio Approach to Education; and staying in a cottage by the mouth of the Gullmarn fjord in Sweden to explore both ancestral and denominational roots.

In addition to travel as a form of renewal, some pastors will use time away from their congregations to engage in new spiritual disciplines, focus on time with loved ones, and study topics that renew their excitement for preaching and congregational life. Activities for congregations include exploring community gardens in relation to evangelism and community engagement, gathering as house church communities to reflect on the lives of historical house church communities from their tradition, and studying topics of wonder and sabbath keeping.

Dr. Robert Saler, Director of the Lilly Endowment [Clergy Renewal Programs](#) at Christian Theological Seminary, noted that the grant programs integrate elements of support, trust, and encouragement, which are all indicators of healthy congregations. “The programs are engineered to honor an innate human need to balance active service to others with periods of reflection and renewal. Animated by a spirit of gratitude and generosity, the programs provide a means for congregations to show appreciation for their leaders and actively invest in their pastors’ health and energy for continued ministry,” Saler said.

Since Lilly Endowment introduced the Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations and the National Clergy Renewal Program in 1999 and 2000 respectively, more than 3,816 congregations across the nation have received funds to support their pastors’ renewal experiences.

In 2023, congregations have received grants totaling more than \$1 million. Congregations were invited to apply for program grants of up to \$60,000. The application process encourages congregations to be actively engaged in designing and developing their pastors’ proposed renewal experiences. Pastors’ families can also participate in the renewal activities. Congregations can allocate up to \$25,000 of the grant to fund interim pastoral leadership, as well as renewal activities within the congregation.

Christian Theological Seminary has administered the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs since 2012. “As our nation and our world navigate complex health, environmental, and geopolitical threats, these grants enable pastors and their congregations to actively partake in the gifts of retreat and renewal that are so needed today,” Saler says.

For a complete list of award recipients, visit: <https://www.cts.edu/2023/12/06/crp-2023-grants/#list>

About [Lilly Endowment Inc.](#)

Lilly Endowment Inc. is a private foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly Sr. and his sons Eli and J.K. Jr. through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. While those

gifts remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, it is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders' wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion. Although the Endowment funds programs throughout the United States, especially in the field of religion, it maintains a special commitment to its founders' hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana. A principal aim of the Endowment's religion grantmaking is to deepen and enrich the lives of Christians in the United States, primarily by seeking out and supporting efforts that enhance the vitality of congregations and strengthen the pastoral and lay leadership of Christian communities. The Endowment also seeks to improve public understanding of diverse religious traditions by supporting fair and accurate portrayals of the role religion plays in the United States and across the globe. Additional information about Lilly Endowment is available at [lillyendowment.org](http://lillyendowment.org).

#### About Christian Theological Seminary

Located in Indianapolis, IN, Christian Theological Seminary (CTS) is a fully accredited ecumenical seminary, open to all, affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Its School of Theology and School of Counseling offer graduate and doctoral degrees, certificates, and lifelong learning programs. More than 30 denominations are represented among CTS faculty and students. Additional information about CTS is available at [www.cts.edu](http://www.cts.edu).

Dr. Robert Saler  
Christian Theological Seminary  
+1 317-931-2348  
[rsaler@cts.edu](mailto:rsaler@cts.edu)

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