

U.S. Congregations Receive Lilly Endowment 2024 Clergy Renewal Program Grants

Christian Theological Seminary announces 198 congregations selected to receive grants through the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program

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-- Christian Theological Seminary, an ecumenical seminary based in Indianapolis, today announces 198 congregations from across the United States have been selected to receive grants through the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations and the Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal

Program. The grants help congregations honor and support their pastors by enabling them to experience a period of extended rest and renewal. The clergy who benefit from these grants pursue activities unique to their interests that encourage them to reflect and renew through travel, scholarly research, or immersive experiences with different cultures and traditions.

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Christopher L. Coble, Vice President for Religion, Lilly Endowment

“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 for rest and renewal so they can come back to their communities reenergized.”

Congregations in the 2024 programs represent the broad spectrum of Christian traditions, including Roman Catholic and Orthodox parishes and congregations from 25



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Protestant denominations. In harmony with the spirit of these programs, congregations and their pastors collaborated to craft plans designed to replenish, restore, and renew pastors in their ministries.

Pastors plan to use grant funds in support of domestic and international travel. For example, one pastor will visit churches with historical significance for their denomination in Italy, Greece, and Germany. Another pastor will visit the mountain in Puerto Rico where their great grandfather first felt called to ministry then visit a church built on land donated by their grandmother on the island's west side.

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 explore topics that renew their excitement for preaching and congregational life. Grants will also fund renewal activities for congregations while their pastors are away. These include practicing contemplative exercises among the trees at local parks, sharing a meal together each week during the pastors leave as they explore Jesus' practice of gospel mission and table fellowship, and a congregation-wide seminar focused on themes of identity, purpose, and calling.

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 designed to affirm an innate human need to balance active service to others with periods of reflection and renewal. Our goal is that these programs supply congregations with the means to express 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 4,293 congregations throughout the United States and in Puerto Rico have received grants in support of renewal experiences for their pastors.

In 2024, the combined Clergy Renewal Programs awarded grants totaling more than \$11M. Congregations were invited to propose grants of up to \$60,000. The process encourages active engagement between congregations and their pastors in designing and developing the renewal experiences. As part of the programs, pastors can include their families in the renewal experience. Congregations may budget up to \$20,000 of the maximum grant toward expenses for interim pastoral leadership, send-off and return celebrations, as well as activities designed for congregational renewal.

Christian Theological Seminary has administered the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs since 2012. "Amidst all the rigors of ministry in a changing world, these grants enable pastors and their congregations to actively partake in the gifts of retreat and renewal that are so needed today," Saler says.

View the full list of [Grant Recipients](#) in the National Clergy Renewal Program for 2024 online.

[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.

[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.

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