



Note to reporters and editors: Please be sure to check the attached list to see if one or more congregations and pastors in your area have received this award. This release and the list are also available on our Web site, lillyendowment.org.

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Lilly Endowment awards 133 grants in National Clergy Renewal Program

Pastors who have benefited from a clergy renewal grant describe their time away as a life-changing journey, a pilgrimage. They had the gift of time to take off their watches and talk, explore, pray, take detours, expect the unexpected.

Now, members of the ninth class of the National Clergy Renewal Program – 138 pastors representing 133 congregations – are about to embark on their own adventures. Funded by the Indianapolis-based Lilly Endowment Inc., the program gives pastors and congregations the opportunity to create their own sabbath journeys.

One of the pastors, who serves a congregation on a Native American reservation in Utah, will use her renewal program to help that congregation recapture its history; another who serves an urban church in Maryland will seek out connections with churches in Africa. Another pastor will reflect on the spiritual and communal aspects of bread baking and bread breaking. Still another will hone her Spanish-language skills through lengthy sojourns in three distinct settings that are the former homes of many in the neighborhood of her church.

“The workload and lifestyle of most pastors are difficult for many to understand,” says Craig Dykstra, Endowment senior vice president for religion. “So many activities command a pastor’s time and attention – often urgent activities such as leading worship, counseling, visiting the sick and grieving – that there is little time left for the pastor to attend to his or her own spiritual growth, reflection and family life.

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“This National Clergy Renewal Program gives pastors the gift of being able to live in sabbath time, to honor that moment as God-given,” Dykstra says. “Many clergy renewal participants have reported to the Endowment that they found their vision for ministry enlarged when they returned and that their call and commitment were renewed.

“We find that these programs can be transformative for the congregations, too,” Dykstra continues. “Not only do they have the opportunity to grow in their leadership abilities in the pastor’s absence, but they also learn that they need to create an environment at their churches that supports their pastor’s continued service at a pace that he or she can sustain. Such a pace can serve as a model for members of the congregation.”

This year’s class of grantees includes congregations in 36 states and 20 Christian denominations. Two of the congregations are nondenominational. Thirty-five have women solo pastors; five have clergy couples as their pastors. Most of the congregations (92) have between 50 and 400 members at worship, and their budgets range from \$100,000 to \$750,000.

Fourteen years ago, the Rev. Suzanne E. Duffield was enjoying her time as the associate rector of a large congregation in Marietta, Ga. While there, she started a partnership with St. Elizabeth’s Episcopal Church on the Ouray and Unitah (Ute) Indian Reservation in the remote high desert of Utah. By 2000, they had been without a priest for five years. They asked Duffield to accept the position.

After much thought, she and her husband sold their “dream home” in Georgia, left their family on the East Coast and ended up in a double-wide trailer in Whiterocks, Utah. Suddenly, she was the pastor of a 100-year-old mission church.

St. Elizabeth’s is the only remaining original building in the town. With a population just shy of 350, Whiterocks is one of the smallest towns on the reservation. It has a postal substation, laundromat, community building, tribal gym, and sparse housing. There are no stores or gas stations; the closest grocery is 18 miles away.

When Duffield arrived, the church may have had eight or nine members. Now membership is about 100.

Duffield does it all because there is no staff. She provides worship, Christian education, training for ministries, pastoral care and counseling, as well as taking care of all the administrative and clerical duties. She writes a monthly newsletter and helps with other community efforts. Her husband provides music for the worship services, oversees the buildings and grounds, and leads a special ministry.

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Duffield thinks the congregation is beginning to take ownership of their church and to realize that the “church does not belong to the priest.” One way to reinforce this ownership is for the congregation to know its own story with this church. Leaders of longtime congregational families have been gathering video and oral histories and amassing historical materials.

Much of the material is in raw form and must be organized for a book format or it will be lost. To accomplish this “historic” task, the Duffields will pack up and drive 2,405 miles to Goose Rocks Beach near Kennebunkport, Maine, where she spent childhood summers. It is the place where she feels the “beauty of creation and finds refreshment and renewal.”

From their rented coastline cottage, Duffield will have time to organize the archival materials – newspaper articles, university sources, pictures and documents, and church records – and write an outline for the book. There also will be plenty of time for reflecting, exercising, reading, writing – and welcoming their children and grandchildren who will visit from Florida and Georgia.

The Rev. Jonathan L. Weaver has presided over the Greater Mount Nebo African Methodist Episcopal Church in Bowie, Md., for 20 years. Smack-dab in the middle of the Washington, D.C., area, the church has ministered to families, youth, the elderly and the less fortunate for 130 years. With Weaver at the helm, the congregation has grown from fewer than 100 members to more than 1,600, and it has embraced his vision as a congregation within an economically vibrant and culturally diverse community.

This hardworking minister with an MBA from Harvard oversees the work of some 40 church ministries. As the founder and longtime president of the Collective Banking Group, a coalition of churches and businesses engaged in economic empowerment, Weaver has often been recognized for his community activities.

But his heart may lie in Africa. His congregation says that Weaver has “sincere love, respect and heart for the people of the African continent.” He has led several church mission trips there, preached and lectured in Swaziland, and encouraged the church to adopt a village in Benin.

Now, while the congregation celebrates its “remarkable past,” it anticipates new efforts in church expansion and new ministry opportunities in domestic violence prevention, intergenerational well-being and international outreach, perhaps even establishing a Global Leadership Institute.

But first, the members think it is time to pause for a “time to grow, restore and explore the vision that binds us together.”

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Weaver agrees. After 20 years, he feels that the demands and pressures of his pastoral, community and global ministry have left him feeling “out of balance.” He would like to travel outside the United States, especially to Africa, where three goals will guide his activities: spiritual growth and renewal, intellectual stimulation and leadership enrichment, and global ministry.

Weaver and his wife will visit England, France, Rwanda and South Africa. In London and Paris, they will attend seminars, relax, enjoy cultural and educational events, meet with clergy and attend worship services.

In Rwanda and South Africa, they will speak with clergy, business leaders, citizens and dignitaries to share and gather information on reconciliation, religion, business, economics, leadership development and global ministry. Weaver may have time to develop his vision of “bridging and connecting leadership of the Collective Banking Group to the creation of a Global Leadership Institute for the African Diaspora in the United States.”

Back in Bowie, his congregation will participate in four immersion workshops about African cultures, listen to speakers from Africa – and plan another mission trip to Benin.

When the Weavers return, the church will hold its annual leadership conference, led by a renewed pastor who will inspire them with new vision and a new plan of action.

Even as a teenager, Bryce Johnson loved to bake bread. His bread was tasty enough to get him hired as chef at a halfway house. Now, as a preacher with a congregation of more than 800, Johnson sees bread-making as a practice that “nourishes body and soul” and as a “metaphor for life and ministry.”

Pastor at White Bear Lake (Minn.) United Methodist Church for 12 years, Johnson will use his renewal time to follow a rhythm of activity, reflection, activity and reflection – similar to bread making: kneading, letting dough rise, shaping, letting dough rise. Johnson would like to return to lead his congregation to rediscover “the One who is ‘the Bread of Life’ and explore ways we are and can be the bread of life for one another and our wider community.”

Johnson says that he senses a “gnawing hunger in the community of plenty where I live.” He believes the congregation wants to find a faith community that “makes time and space to feed the soul; to connect more deeply with others; and to contribute something of substance to the world.”

He has spent the last four years spearheading a \$2.2 million building project, developing a smooth-running staff, and engaging the congregation in a strategic planning process. His congregants know he needs a “restorative break from the intensity of his work,” and that break will allow them “to practice what we preach: shared leadership.”

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Johnson, along with his wife and son, will take off for six weeks in Italy and France to explore bread-making and the use of traditional brick ovens in Italy and France. First stop: Umbria and an artisan bread school. Next stop: the village of Puymule in southern France, where the residents have rebuilt a 300-year-old communal bread oven. Such ovens were once the center of community life and, after centuries of nonuse, are being built again. Johnson is curious to learn why.

Third stop: Paris. (Excellent bread!)

Johnson will continue alone up to Iona Abbey in Scotland to explore the Celtic tradition with its themes of “earthiness, simplicity, community, economic justice, and the conviction that “everything we do is worship.” His last month of renewal back in the U.S. will find him reading at the family cabin, attending abbey retreats, and volunteering in St. Paul.

His congregation at White Bear Lake will be eager to hear about his journeys and prepared for discussions on how to move beyond busy routines and over-programmed lives to have a deeper connection with God. Johnson’s sabbatical will have let them know this is possible. He probably will also bring them gifts of bread.

When the Rev. La Verne Adams arrived 10 years ago at Cathedral of Praise in west Philadelphia to begin her first ministry, she faced a congregation of about 30 senior citizens. Today, somewhat in wonder, her congregation says: “She brought the church from the state of near death to the place that we actually thrive with excellence.”

The past decade has seen the congregation grow to 150 members, a calendar of activities that keeps the 30,000-square-foot facility hopping, and a ministry list that keeps the members busy and employs about 30 people from the community.

Now, 10 years after she arrived, she is ready for a rest – a time to learn Spanish in places where Spanish is spoken and to take up the piano.

“Dr. Adams is an avid singer,” her parishioners report, and “on most Sundays you can hear her singing in our services. To be able to play a tune on the piano as well as sing would make her most happy. And that is how we want to see her!”

Adams has two reasons to learn Spanish well. First, she longs to make connections with her Hispanic heritage. Born to an African American mother and a Hispanic father, she has lived most of her life as an African American female. All she has of her father is a wallet-size photo. Learning Spanish, she believes, may help her envision the life he may have lived.

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Second, she believes a sabbatical to Central America will be a wonderful opportunity to extend the Cathedral's ministry to new Hispanic residents in the area near the church.

She has tried to learn Spanish before – beginner's courses, tapes and CDs. They didn't work. But being where Spanish is spoken and studying the language 20 hours a week in places where she can slip away to a beach, park or special event will give her the cultural context to become confident using her new language. She will return with a song for her congregation, a sense of connection with her father, and the ability to converse easily with new neighbors.

All these renewal programs exhibit the basic thrust of the Endowment's program: a chance for congregations and ministers to engage in mutual renewal that will have an important impact on their churches, their individual members and their communities.

"The wealth of imagination unleashed by this program is truly wonderful to see," says the Endowment's Dykstra. "We can think of no better way to honor these hardworking men and women than to help them experience personal growth and renewal in ways that they themselves dream up and feel will feed them most deeply."

The Endowment plans to continue the program for 2009; an announcement is expected soon.

Please see the attached list of recipients.

A complete list of the 2008 clergy renewal recipients follows.

National Clergy Renewal Program/2008
133 grants

Alabama

Birmingham – Asbury United Methodist Church, \$44,228
Mark S. Lacey

Arizona

Sun City – Church of the Palms (United Church of Christ [UCC]), \$44,980
Leonard W. Silvester

Tucson – Rincon Mountain Presbyterian Church (Presbyterian Church in America),
\$44,740
Philip S. Krus

Colorado

Colorado Springs – Broadmoor Community Church (UCC), \$43,763
James D. Chapman

Denver – Church of the Ascension (Episcopal), \$45,000
James R. Harlan

Englewood – First Plymouth Congregational Church (UCC), \$44,786
Jane Anne Ferguson

Greenwood Village – St. Catherine Greek Orthodox Church, \$45,000
Louis J. Christopoulos

Connecticut

Hartford – Christ Church Cathedral (Episcopal), \$44,883
Mark B. Pendleton

Delaware

Georgetown – St. Paul's Episcopal Church, \$43,966
Earl D. Beshears

Florida

Jacksonville – First Presbyterian Church (Presbyterian Church of the USA [PCUSA]),
\$38,295
Robert L. Morris Jr.

Jacksonville Beach – Palms Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), \$37,458
Thomas W. Walker

Orange Park – Cross+Road Lutheran Church (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America [ELCA]), \$31,200
James E. Graeser Jr.

Orlando – Korean Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), \$45,000
Inki Kim

Ponte Vedra Beach – Christ Episcopal Church, \$44,800
Robert L. Morris

Georgia

Atlanta – Central Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), \$40,000
Gary W. Charles

Cartersville – St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, \$41,950
Daniel Stack

Savannah – First Baptist Church (Cooperative Baptist Fellowship [CBF]), \$45,000
John M. Finley

Illinois

Bloomington – Bloomington Alliance Church (Christian and Missionary Alliance), \$35,915
David J. Riemenschneider

Chicago – Lake View Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), \$44,773
Joy Douglas Strome

Chicago – Reformation Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA), \$43,000
Joseph M. Bocko

Decatur – First Christian Church (nondenominational), \$39,856
Wayne D. Kent

Deerfield – St. Gregory's Episcopal Church, \$35,762
William D. Roberts

Effingham – First Baptist Church (Southern Baptist Convention [SBC]), \$41,586
Roger H. Marshall

Grayslake – Wildwood Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), \$45,000
Greg R. and Kathleen S. Bostrom

Naperville – Alleluia! Lutheran Church (ELCA), \$45,000
Mark A. Juliot

Rockford – Second Congregational Church (UCC), \$44,760
J. Michael Solberg

West Chicago – St. Andrew Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA), \$44,865
John F. Dumke

Iowa

Bettendorf – St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, \$33,529
Lynne T. Carver

Coralville – First Christian Church of Iowa City (Disciples of Christ), \$41,119
John W. McKinstry

Pella – First Christian Reformed Church (Christian Reformed Church in North America), \$37,505
Jeffrey L. Sajdak

Kentucky

Louisville – Plymouth Congregational Church (UCC), \$43,956
Altonette D. Hawkins

Maine

Houlton – Military Street Baptist Church (American Baptist Churches/USA [ABC/USA]), \$43,575
Randall L. Burns

Maryland

Baltimore – St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA), \$44,995
T. Gregory Knepp

Bowie – Greater Mount Nebo AME Church (African Methodist Episcopal), \$45,000
Jonathan L. Weaver

Chestertown – Presbyterian Church of Chestertown (PCUSA), \$42,510
Sara A. Holben

St. Michaels – Vestry of St. Michael’s Parish (Episcopal), \$45,000
Mark S. and Abigail C. Nestlehutt

Severn – Church at Severn Run (SBC), \$44,282
Drew E. Shofner

Massachusetts

Andover – Parish of Christ Church (Episcopal), \$45,000
Jeffrey S. Gill

Boston – St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, \$35,300
Timothy E. Crellin

Dennis – Dennis Union Church (UCC), \$44,860
Dale Rosenberger

Sheffield – Christ Church Episcopal, \$23,047
Anne E. Ryder

Sutton – St. John's Episcopal and Trinity Lutheran Church (Episcopal and ELCA),
\$30,330
John D. Betit

Wayland – Church of the Holy Spirit (Episcopal), \$44,948
Frederick P. Moser

Michigan

Acme – Feast of Victory Lutheran Church (ELCA), \$30,410
James W. Helman

Battle Creek – Trinity Lutheran Church (ELCA), \$39,145
Colleen R. Nelson

Constantine – Florence Church of the Brethren (Mennonite), \$45,000
Nina B. Lanctot

Farmington Hills – First Presbyterian Church of Farmington (PCUSA), \$45,000
Sue E. Melrose

Grand Rapids – Shawnee Park Christian Reformed Church (Christian Reformed
Church in North America), \$45,000
Everett J. Vander Horst

Jackson – First Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), \$44,911
James D. Hegedus

Mason – First United Methodist Church, \$45,000
Robert L. Hundley Jr.

Romeo – Romeo United Methodist Church, \$43,187
Gary R. Glanville

Spring Lake – First Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), \$44,739
Daniel K. Anderson

Minnesota

Austin – Christ Church (Episcopal), \$19,415
Scott B. Monson

Bemidji – Bemidji Evangelical Covenant Church, \$45,000
Dean R. Nelson

Bovey – Lawron Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), \$34,677
Dorothy E. Duquette

Circle Pines – Our Savior’s Lutheran Church (ELCA), \$43,598
Karn S. Carroll

Duluth – Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd (ELCA), \$44,598
David E. Mesner

Eden Prairie – Church of Pax Christi (Catholic), \$45,000
Patrick Kennedy

Edina – Christ Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), \$45,000
Paul B. Tshihamba

Grand Marais – Bethlehem Lutheran Church (ELCA), \$45,000
Mark H. Ditmanson

Minneapolis – Bethlehem Baptist Church (Baptist General Conference [BGC]),
\$42,337
J. David Livingston

Minneapolis – Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church, \$44,644
Bruce W. Robbins

Minneapolis – Plymouth Congregational Church (UCC), \$36,932
Paula Northwood

Minneapolis – Trinity Lutheran Congregation (ELCA), \$43,860
Jane A. Buckley-Farlee

St. Cloud – Bethlehem Lutheran Church (ELCA), \$42,639
Diane S. Pederson

St. Paul – House of Hope Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), \$43,582
Thomas W. Forster-Smith

St. Paul – Macalester Plymouth United Church (PCUSA/UCC), \$45,000
Heidi H. Vardeman

Wayzata – Wayzata Community Church (UCC), \$45,000
John F. Ross

White Bear Lake – White Bear Lake United Methodist Church, \$41,700
Bryce W. Johnson

Mississippi

Clinton – Northside Baptist Church (CBF and SBC), \$36,799
Joseph S. Wilson

Oxford – St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, \$43,600
W. Taylor Moore Jr.

Missouri

St. Louis – First Congregational Church (UCC), \$45,000
Ann A. Wilson

Nebraska

Lincoln – SouthPointe Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), \$44,120
Craig M. Walls

New Hampshire

Deering – Deering Community Church (UCC), \$39,618
Barbara L. Currie

Derry – Church of the Transfiguration (Episcopal), \$43,923
Susan L. LeSueur

Hanover – Our Savior Lutheran Church (ELCA), \$45,000
Michael P. and Susan P. Thomas

North Conway – Lutheran Church of the Nativity (ELCA), \$44,804
Timothy A. and Anne R. Roser

New Jersey

Moorestown – First Baptist Church (ABC/USA), \$45,000
René C. Hudson

Ocean City – St. Peter’s United Methodist Church, \$44,981
Brian C. Roberts

Trenton – Grant Chapel AME Church, \$44,524
Melinda Contreras-Byrd

Trenton – St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, \$45,000
Dirk C. Reinken

New Mexico

Albuquerque – St. Paul’s United Methodist Church, \$45,000
Leroy Elmore Jr.

Shiprock – Bethel Christian Reformed Church (Christian Reformed Church in North America), \$44,735
John J. Greydanus

New York

Conklin – First Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), \$43,472
Stephen W. Starzer

Hamilton – St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, \$37,974
Donnel O'Flynn

New Rochelle – St. Simon the Cyrenian Episcopal Church, \$45,000
Benoni Y. Ogwal-Abwang

New York – Church of St. Mary the Virgin (Episcopal), \$29,501
Steven S. Gerth Jr.

New York – Trinity Baptist Church (BGC), \$40,105
Keith D. Boyd

North Carolina

Arden – Lutheran Church of the Nativity (ELCA), \$41,890
Sara R. Ilderton

Burlington – First Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), \$41,599
Ronald L. Shive

Charlotte – Park Road Baptist Church (Alliance of Baptists), \$44,260
James R. and Amy J. Dean

Goldsboro – First Baptist Church (CBF), \$44,378
Glenn F. Phillips Jr.

Harrisburg – Harrisburg United Methodist Church, \$41,267
J. Daniel Hester

Henderson – Shiloh Baptist Church (Missionary Baptist), \$44,661
Joseph L. Ratliff

Raleigh – St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, \$44,905
Mark G. Reamer

Raleigh – Umstead Park United Church of Christ, \$45,000
Douglas S. Long

Wilmington – St. Andrew's On-the-Sound Episcopal Church, \$45,000
Richard G. Elliott III

Winston-Salem – Green Street United Methodist Church, \$40,610
Kelly P. Carpenter

North Dakota

Fargo – Olivet Lutheran Church (ELCA), \$45,000
Tiffany A. Sundeen

Ohio

Cincinnati – St. John's Westminster Union Church (PCUSA/UCC), \$39,975
Kathryn A. Barlow Westmoreland

Columbus – First Community Church (interdenominational), \$36,410
David S. Hett

Findlay – Findlay Evangelical Presbyterian Church, \$40,324
Benjamin A. Borsay

Youngstown – St. Brendan Roman Catholic Church, \$45,000
James M. Daprile

Oregon

Beaverton – First Baptist Church (SBC), \$30,965
Norman H. Langston

Eugene – First Congregational United Church of Christ, \$45,000
Melanie A. Oommen

Pennsylvania

Boyetown – Church of the Good Shepherd (UCC), \$43,597
Dennis P. Christie

Carlisle – Carlisle Brethren in Christ Church, \$45,000
W. Alan Robinson

Philadelphia – Cathedral of Praise Community Church (ABC/USA), \$45,000
La Verne T. Adams

Philipsburg – First Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), \$45,000
Tracy A. Bullis

South Dakota

Sioux Falls – First Lutheran Church (ELCA), \$37,830
Barbara Wangsness

Tennessee

Franklin – St. Paul's Episcopal Church, \$40,922
Robert W. Cowperthwaite

Milligan College – Hopwood Memorial Christian Church (Christian Churches/Churches of Christ), \$38,400
Timothy W. Ross

Texas

Houston – West Houston Chinese Church (nondenominational), \$35,073
David C. Hsu

San Antonio – Church of Reconciliation (Episcopal), \$38,260
Robert J. Woody

Utah

Whiterocks – St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church, \$41,568
Suzanne E. Duffield

Vermont

Barre – Barre Congregational Church (UCC), \$40,865
David N. Vanderlinde-Abernathy

Randolph – Bethany Church (UCC), \$39,951
Robin K. Junker

Windsor – First Congregational Church (UCC), \$43,100
Amanda B. Lape-Freeberg

Virginia

Alexandria – Fairlington Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), \$43,994
Janice L. Edmiston

Annandale – Ravensworth Baptist Church (ABC/USA), \$45,000
Stephen G. Hyde

Arlington – St. Peter's Episcopal Church, \$44,856
Craig A. Phillips

Fairfax – Fairfax Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), \$44,305
Henry G. Brinton

Radford – First Baptist Church (CBF/SBC), \$43,851
Paul A. Lane

Washington

Maple Valley – Maple Valley Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), \$44,669
David G. Diehl

Seattle – Bethany United Church of Christ, \$43,970
Angela L. Ying

Seattle – Plymouth Congregational Church (UCC), \$45,000
David W. Shinn

Seattle – Queen Anne Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), \$43,809
Douglas J. Early

Walla Walla – Emmanuel Lutheran Church (ELCA), \$42,321
Mark S. Koonz

Wisconsin

Appleton – All Saints Episcopal Church, \$35,179
Patrick T. Twomey

Kenosha – Lord of Life Lutheran Church (ELCA), \$18,758
Jennifer J. Arnold

Madison – St. Mark's Lutheran Church (ELCA), \$33,860
Mary M. Pharmer

Waupin – Edgewood Community Church (Evangelical Free Church), \$44,733
Roger H. Knowlton II

Wyoming

Laramie – St. Matthew's Cathedral (Episcopal), \$42,225
Marilyn J. Engstrom