

Clergy sabbatical program transferred to seminary

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A popular sabbatical program for clergy launched in 2000 by the Lilly Endowment philanthropic foundation has been transferred to Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, the foundation announced in September.

The annual awards to outstanding pastors and their congregations ranged as high as \$50,000 in separate Indiana and national competitions. The winners split the money, a smaller portion going to help churches carry on in the pastor's absence and the rest going to ministers and priests for travel, study or other activities.

The endowment's Clergy Renewal Program, which sought to "rejuvenate the ministries" at more than 2,000 congregations in Indiana and other states, gave \$8 million to the Disciples of Christ-related seminary for the creation in August of a Center for Pastoral Excellence to administer the Clergy Renewal program.

"Pastors need time away from their congregations to gain new perspectives," said Robert Saler, who was named director of the new center and will serve as a research fellow on campus. Saler received his Ph.D. at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago in 2011 and was serving as pastor at Bethel Lutheran Church in Gary, Indiana.

N. Clay Robbins, the endowment's president and CEO, said no substantial changes will be made to the renewal program when it resumes in 2013.