

Saint Paul Area Synod receives grant from the Lilly Endowment's Thriving in Ministry Initiative



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The Saint Paul Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has received a grant of \$375,000 to help expand the mentoring capacity of the synod. The program is called *From the Center Outward*. It is part of Lilly Endowment Inc.'s Thriving in Ministry, an initiative that supports a variety of religious organizations across the nation as they create or strengthen programs that help pastors build relationships with experienced clergy who can serve as mentors and guide them through key leadership challenges in congregational ministry.

The Endowment is making nearly \$70 million in grants through the Thriving in Ministry initiative.

From the Center Outward seeks to expand the mentoring capacity of the Saint Paul Area Synod along three tracks. Each is designed to connect, resource and encourage bolder leadership where weariness, isolation and self-limitation might take root amid the multiple demands placed on pastors. One cohort is designed for pastors in their fourth to tenth years of public ministry, a second cohort focuses on developing executive leadership capacity through mentor relationship with the nonprofit sector, and a third cohort is for leaders of color serving in our synod.

Deep reflection on the world, a lifelong study of scripture, graceful work with lay leaders, and curiosity about context, people and self will all be supported by the strong structure of a mentoring culture. The activities made possible by this grant affirm that clergy thrive when they connect with their human capacity for joy, curiosity and an enduring relationship with others in a community of learning. Planning, training and preparation for the five years of the grant will take place during 2019, with the first cohorts launching in 2020.

Patricia Lull, bishop of the Saint Paul Area Synod, says, "My own pastoral ministry has been formed by the disciplined study of scripture, curiosity about changes in the church and world and the glad company of others with a passion for learning in complex and challenging contexts. I am excited to see what a rising generation of pastors will discover in tandem with talented, inquisitive, faithful mentors. I know this will stretch the participants and am grateful for the investment of Lilly Endowment in this five-year project."

The Saint Paul Area Synod is one of 78 organizations located in 29 states that is taking part in the initiative. The organizations reflect diverse Christian traditions: mainline and evangelical Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox.

Thriving in Ministry is part of Lilly Endowment's grantmaking to strengthen pastoral leadership in Christian congregations in the United States. This has been a grantmaking priority at Lilly Endowment for nearly 25 years.

"Leading a congregation today is multi-faceted and exceptionally demanding," said Christopher L. Coble, Lilly Endowment's vice president for religion. "When pastors have opportunities to build meaningful relationships with experienced colleagues, they are able to negotiate the challenges of ministry and their leadership thrives. These promising programs will help pastors develop these kinds of relationships, especially when they are in the midst of significant professional transitions."

Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by three members of the Lilly family - J.K. Lilly Sr. and sons Eli and J.K. Jr. - through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business,



Lilly Endowment Inc.

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Eli Lilly & Company. While those gifts remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, the Endowment 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. The Endowment maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and its home state Indiana. Its grantmaking in religion focuses on supporting efforts to strengthen the leadership and vitality of Christian congregations throughout the country and to increase the public's understanding of the role of religion in public life.