



CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

2026 Lilly
Endowment

CLERGY RENEWAL PROGRAM

National

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What Will Make Your Heart Sing?

Welcome to the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program! We are grateful for your interest in our program and encourage you to read carefully through this Request for Proposals as you discern whether your congregation will submit a proposal to support a renewal leave for your pastor.

“What will make your heart sing?” It is a simple question, but one that holds profound possibilities for renewing the ministries of pastors and congregations. Drawing on the wisdom of “sabbath” rest traditions within scripture and the life of the church, Clergy Renewal Programs seek to provide opportunities for pastors and congregations to explore this question together and design programs to help their pastors reconnect with their deep roots and sources of joy in ministry and in life. We believe that when pastors have the opportunity to step away from their congregations and engage in activities that make their hearts sing, the whole church benefits.



PROGRAM PURPOSE

The Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program at Christian Theological Seminary (CTS) seeks to strengthen Christian congregations by providing opportunities for their pastors to step away briefly from the demands of daily parish life and engage in a period of renewal and reflection.

We recognize that clergy take on a variety of pastoral roles within their congregations: preacher, teacher, spiritual guide, counselor, friend, confidant. The demands of ministry can feel relentless. Keeping pace with these demands can be tiring. Drawing on practices of sabbath rest, we recognize that pastors occasionally need time to replenish their spiritual reservoirs and regain energy and strength for their calling. Sabbath rest includes time for pastors to renew themselves physically, emotionally, relationally, and spiritually.

Clergy renewal periods are not vacations; rather, they provide opportunities for discovering what will make the pastor's heart sing through well-planned purposeful activities. Renewal leaves allow for times of intentional exploration, reflection, and regaining enthusiasm and creativity for ministry. Life-giving experiences—strengthening relationships, renewing a sense of call, meeting and serving the neighbor in a new way, finding joy and purpose in a simplified life, traveling to new lands and

unfamiliar territories, creating opportunities where members of the congregation can exercise their gifts for ministry—are common themes of these renewal times. Profound discoveries that pastors and their congregations describe as “life-changing events” occur as they participate in this program.

Renewal leaves can take many forms as each congregation and pastor uniquely answers the question, “What will make your heart sing?” One pastor traveled to South Africa to immerse herself in contemplation of reconciliation and forgiveness in action. Another pastor remained close to home but spent time engaging in art, rekindling creativity in his being. From the Holy Land to the holy spaces in pastors' lives, clergy and their congregations have used these grants to rejuvenate their hearts' songs to the benefit of their shared ministries.

Together the Endowment and CTS believe in the profound importance of pastoral ministry, not only to the people directly served, but also to the larger community and society. We celebrate the wonderful diversity of U.S. congregations in terms of their size, locale, culture, language, and more. And so, we are committed to offering these programs in ways that make them as accessible as possible to the wide variety of congregations as they pursue faithful ministry. We warmly invite proposals from congregations on behalf of the broad spectrum of ordained pastors, whether full-time, part-time, multi-vocational, senior, associate, and so on.



“It was a spiritual experience—one that leaves me permanently affected and marked. I can never have that taken away from me. It has changed who I am: to trust, relax, share, and celebrate more.”

— Past Clergy Renewal Grant Recipient

THE CLERGY RENEWAL GRANTS PROGRAM

The Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program at Christian Theological Seminary is a competitive grants program open to Christian congregations in the United States and Puerto Rico that have an ordained pastor who serves in parish ministry and can envision this program as a means of renewing their commitment to the congregation and to ordained ministry. It is designed for those congregations and pastors who have a strong relationship with one another, a high degree of mutual trust and support, and are eager to see their relationship strengthened and renewed for future ministry together. Congregations may request a total maximum award of \$60,000. Of that amount, up to \$20,000 may be allocated to the congregational budget for costs associated with fulfilling pastoral duties during the pastor's absence and for activities that renew the congregation in its ministry. However, there is no cap on the budget for the pastor's renewal leave activities. If the congregation chooses not to budget grant funds for expenses it will incur during the pastor's absence, the full \$60,000 may be applied to the pastor's budget.



“Having a theme to my sabbatical was very helpful; I was able to travel with a sense of integration and purpose.”

— Past Clergy Renewal Grant Recipient

Congregational leaders and the pastor should work together to design the renewal program. They will agree on 1) the structure of the program, 2) the pastor's activities during the program, 3) congregational renewal activities during the pastor's leave, and 4) how the pastor and congregation will share their experiences and insights with one another when the renewal leave concludes. The congregation will submit the proposal to CTS.

Clergy Renewal grant proposals are due **March 18, 2026**.

Awards in the National Clergy Renewal Program will be announced on August 28, 2026. Please wait until after this date before inquiring about a decision.

CTS plans to award as many as 195 grants to congregations who submit the most outstanding proposals.

Eligibility

Christian congregations that meet the following criteria are eligible to submit proposals for a clergy renewal leave for their pastors:

- Christian congregations must be in one of the 49 states (other than Indiana), Washington, DC, or Puerto Rico.
- Clergy must be serving as pastoral leaders in congregational ministry, whether part-time, full-time, or bi-vocational.
- Clergy must hold ordination at the time the proposal is submitted and be a member in good standing with their denomination or, for congregations independent of denominational affiliation, their ordaining ecclesial network.
- Clergy must hold Master of Divinity degrees or equivalents or, clergy without Master of Divinity degrees must be in good standing with their ordaining body and demonstrate a strong record of congregational service and commitment to ongoing education/professional development.

Please note: The Clergy Renewal Program is designed to support pastors serving local congregations and parishes. Thus, CTS can only accept proposals from eligible Christian congregations on behalf of the clergy who serve them in pastoral leadership roles.

If you have questions about whether your congregation is eligible for this program, please contact CTS before submitting a proposal.

Grant Parameters

In preparing proposals for Clergy Renewal grants, CTS encourages congregations to attend to the following:

- **The maximum renewal grant award is \$60,000.** The Clergy Renewal Program is intended to be flexible. Requests for any amount up to \$60,000 (including the full amount) are welcome; the key is to give a compelling rationale for the total request. Each congregation is encouraged to request an amount that best fits its unique situation. Congregations may allocate up to \$20,000 of the maximum award to the Congregational Budget to cover expenses for pulpit supply, events related to the pastor's leave-taking and return, or events designed to renew the congregation in its ministry.
 - **A total leave time of at least 3 months, either continuous or in shorter leaves, is encouraged.** Renewal leaves may be taken all at one time or as multiple shorter leaves of at least two weeks each. The leave must begin in 2027, no earlier than January 1. However, applicants have through December 31, 2028 to complete their proposed program. Whether planned as a single block of time or several, it is encouraged that the pastor's total time away adds up to **at least 3 months**.
 - The congregation **must continue the pastor's salary and benefits** during the renewal leave. By submitting a proposal, the congregation confirms this intent. Similarly, by submitting a proposal, the congregation and pastor affirm their intent for the pastor to continue serving the congregation for at least one year after the renewal program concludes.
 - Clergy Renewal **grants are made to the congregations**, not the Leave-taking Pastors, and are not portable. If at any point the pastor intended to benefit from the grant should leave their staff position with the congregation, all grant related activities and expenditures must cease, any unspent funds returned to CTS, and a final financial accounting for all expenditures provided to CTS. Similarly, if the Leave-taking Pastor should receive a call to serve another congregation or otherwise leave their staff position with the congregation after submitting a proposal, the proposal should be withdrawn.
- The Clergy Renewal Program **cannot be used as a fellowship program** for work toward an academic degree. Some part of the proposed program may include travel for the purpose of research or directed study. However, if plans are strictly dedicated to the pursuit of an academic degree, applicants are advised to find support elsewhere.
 - **Congregations with married co-pastors** may submit a joint proposal. However, clergy couples serving different congregations must submit separate proposals with their respective congregations. Each spouse may include the other, as desired, in their individual renewal program plans. Congregations with multiple ordained pastors who are not spouses may submit a proposal for only one pastor in a program year.
 - Congregations that previously received a Clergy Renewal grant **may submit a proposal for a different pastor**. A subsequent proposal may be submitted for consideration when these three conditions are met:
 1. After the first pastor and the congregation have completed their renewal program and
 2. Three years will have elapsed between the time the previous pastor's renewal program ended and the next pastor's renewal program would begin and
 3. If all final reporting requirements have been satisfactorily met.
 - Pastors in the National Clergy Renewal program **may benefit from a Clergy Renewal grant only once** in their lifetime.



“We believe three to four months is a good time period for a sabbatical. It is long enough to get into a different rhythm, but not so long as to feel disconnected from the church.”

— Past Clergy Renewal Grant Recipient

Selection Procedures

Because this is a competitive initiative, CTS receives many more proposals than it is able to fund. Clergy Renewal grant selection procedures are designed so that each proposal receives full consideration and attention. An impartial panel will review the proposals. The size of the request will not be a determining factor unless—in the best judgment of the panel—the amount requested is inadequate or unrealistic to fulfill the renewal program described in the proposal.

What are the selection criteria?

- Clearly articulated vision for what will make the pastor's heart sing.
- Leave-taking Pastor's program balances time for rest and reflection with travel, activities, and time spent connecting with others.
- Budgets are realistic and well-researched.
- Evidence of broad congregational awareness of and support for submitting the proposal. Congregational approval must be confirmed before submitting the proposal. Such approval may take different forms depending on the congregation's polity, size, etc. The goal is to ensure that, if the proposal is selected, the grant will be accepted and well-received by the congregation.
- Proposals will be evaluated in terms of the renewal program's feasibility, coherence, creativity, and potential benefits to the congregation and pastor.



RESOURCES FOR APPLICANTS

During the 26 years since the Clergy Renewal Program's inception, both Lilly Endowment and Christian Theological Seminary have learned a great deal about what congregations and pastors value in this program.

CTS encourages applicants to review the formatting templates along with the documents "What Makes a High-Quality Proposal?" and "Grace Notes" available from the Resources page on our website (see below). These documents offer helpful guidance on how to format the proposal, as well as wisdom and advice from previous grant recipients that can stimulate your creative thinking and provide helpful advice on the practical aspects of designing and submitting a proposal. The most recent Information Webinar can also be found on the Resources page in the Clergy Renewal Playlist section. Please note, CTS does not provide examples of previously successful Clergy Renewal grant proposals.

- Visit cts.edu/cpe/clergy-renewal/resources
- For a guide to planning clergy renewal programs, prospective applicants may be interested in the following print resources:
 - *Clergy Renewal: The Alban Guide to Sabbatical Planning*, published by the Alban Institute.
 - *Journeying Toward Renewal*, also published by the Alban Institute.
 - *Planning Sabbaticals: A Guide for Congregations and their Pastors*, published by Chalice Press.

"Approach the renewal program slowly and thoughtfully, incorporating as much of the church family as possible so that everyone feels a part of the planning and the process. Make it celebrative. Be clear that it is not added 'vacation' time but renewal time." — *Past Clergy Renewal Grant Recipient*

Grant Recipient

Writing the Proposal

Preparing a Clergy Renewal grant proposal is intended as an occasion for joyful discernment and collaboration between the congregation and Leave-taking Pastor as they consider what will make their collective hearts sing. For this reason, CTS does not encourage use of professional grant writers from outside the congregation.

CTS now provides an online portal for submitting a grant proposal. The complete process includes entering the information from the worksheets (page 13) into the corresponding fields in the portal, preparing the written portion of the proposal, and uploading it on the final page of the portal. The final page of the portal also provides a place for you to include a link when choosing to provide a video response to narrative question A8.

The proposal elements presented in this section will be combined into a single PDF document. Please refer to the Proposal PDF Checklist on page 19 for more details. A fillable version of the Tax-Exempt Status & Signatures form is available from our landing page under Step 3 or by scanning the QR code on page 11.

The required signatures must be provided by signing a completed and printed copy of the form, referred to as ink or “wet” signatures. CTS cannot accept e-signatures, script fonts used as signatures, or image files pasted into the document.

Proposal Elements

Proposal Narrative: Write a three-part Proposal Narrative that provides the information requested in Parts A, B, and C.

Please follow these formatting guidelines:

- **10-page limit for Parts A-C**
- Number each response with the part and question number, example: A1 or B3
- 1-inch margins
- Double spaced
- 12 pt. font in Times New Roman or similar serif font
- Number pages beginning at 1

Part A – Program Rationale and Design

1. Provide a statement that describes how the renewal leave and its activities will “make the pastor’s heart sing.” In doing so, give careful thought to how the proposed activities relate to the vision and promote renewal for ministry.
2. Provide a detailed description of the pastor’s activities based on the Renewal Program Outline. Indicate whether the leave time will be a single, uninterrupted block, or several shorter leaves taken over 24 months that are each at least 2 weeks long. Include a brief description and purpose for each activity.
3. Provide a statement written by the pastor that explains why this is the right time in the pastor’s ministry to engage this program and what benefits the pastor hopes to receive as a result.
4. Provide a statement written by a representative of the congregation that summarizes the congregation’s views as to the intended benefits of the program for both the congregation and pastor.

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5. Describe the congregation's plans for covering the necessary pastoral functions during the pastor's absence, for celebrating the pastor's leave-taking and/or return, and for programs or activities that will serve to renew the congregation.
6. Tell us how the congregation plans to honor the program's expectation for minimal contact between the congregation and pastor during renewal leave periods. Have responsible parties been identified? What plans are in place and which leaders have been identified and empowered for decision-making and leadership during the pastor's leave time?
7. Give a description of the process by which the congregation made the decision to submit a proposal. Provide a detailed description of the process by which the congregation was made aware of and given opportunity to express support for engaging the program.
8. Is there anything else you would like the readers to know about the congregation, its ministry, and why this program will be beneficial? You may respond to this question in narrative form or provide a creative element like a video, for instance. Please do not provide both. Any creative element response must be hosted using a platform that allows sharing without a login or password. The maximum time for a creative element is **5 minutes**. If your submission is longer than 5 minutes, as a response to A8 in your proposal narrative, please specify a timestamp where the review team should start watching. On the final page of the online portal include a link to your creative element in the field provided..

Part B – Congregational Information

1. Describe any especially illuminating or distinctive historical events in the life of this church that will help the readers get to know the congregation.
2. List a representative sampling of current ministries, both internal and external, in which your congregation is engaged.
3. Provide the names and tenure of the four pastors who served the congregation prior to the pastor for whom the congregation is submitting this proposal.

“While I returned rested and refreshed, I also returned highly charged and somehow more resolved. It has been an amazing and life-changing journey.”

— *Past Clergy Renewal Grant Recipient*

Part C – Pastoral Information

1. Tell us about the pastor's educational experience after high school. Provide the names of colleges, seminaries, Bible institutes, and certificate programs, as well as degrees or certificates earned and the years they were granted.
2. Provide the pastor's date of ordination, name of the ordaining body, and tenure and places of previous pastoral positions.
3. Provide the readers with any additional information about the pastor and their ministry, career, and community involvement you believe will be helpful in the evaluation process.

Pastor & Congregation Budgets

The total grant funds request may not exceed \$60,000. Of that amount, up to \$20,000 may be budgeted for congregational expenses and renewal activities. However, there is no cap on the pastor's budget. If the congregation chooses not to budget grant funds for expenses it will incur during the pastor's absence, the full \$60,000 may be applied to the budget for the pastor's renewal leave activities.

If you anticipate using funds from other sources, provide an explanation in the appropriate Budget Narrative (pastor or congregation) describing the source of the funds and how they will be used. Budget worksheets can be found on page 18.

- Grant funds may not be used for improvements, additions, or repairs to the church building, or for other capital expenditures or equipment/technology expenses.
- Include costs for all inclusive travel with the Meals & Lodging budget.
- **About Equipment & Supplies Expenses:** Equipment & supplies expenses should be no more than 10 percent of the pastor's budget. The budget narrative should list the items requested and describe why they are essential to the renewal experience. Applicants are encouraged to make sure that the cost of such items is appropriate to their significance for the program and proportional in relation to the overall budget. Refer to the [Grace Notes](#) document on the CTS website for further information and guidance. Excessive requests for equipment will not receive favorable consideration. The congregation and pastor should determine as part of their preparation of the grant proposal to whom equipment and supplies purchased will belong (i.e., the pastor or the congregation) once the renewal program concludes.



You may include any sources used to determine costs such as travel guides, company websites, government websites, or quotes from a travel agent. You may note the name of the site or source but do not need to include website URLs or links.

When researching and determining the budgets, keep in mind that CTS cannot accommodate requests for additional funding after the proposal is submitted. Ensure the budget includes sufficient grant funds to support the various renewal leave related expenses for pastor and congregation.

Please follow these guidelines for preparing the budget narratives:

- **About Tuition & Coursework Fees:** The budget may also include costs associated with fees for tuition or other coursework costs, whether for credit or personal enrichment. This line is strictly for academic or continuing education opportunities. Costs for classes like woodworking, instrument lessons, cooking, art, and other similar opportunities should be included as part of the Other budget.
- **About Tax Liability Offset:** The budget may include funds meant to offset any increase to the pastor's personal income tax liability that accrues because of this grant. There are many factors at both the state and federal levels that can impact whether a grant affects the pastor's personal income tax liability. Because of these complexities, we cannot offer tax advice related to these grants. We highly recommend consulting with a trusted financial/tax advisor and discussing the details of the grant, the pastor's personal finances, and the church's best practices with respect to how reimbursements are managed, and then following that advisor's recommendations as to whether to budget funds toward the Tax Liability Off-set line. When determining any potential impact to the pastor, it may be helpful to understand that all grant funds are disbursed to the congregation and not the individual pastor. In addition, neither CTS nor Lilly Endowment Incorporated (LEI) will issue 1099 forms related to these grants.
- **About Congregational Renewal Activities:** Provide detailed information about how you calculated this budget line in your budget narrative for the congregation's budget. In Part A, question 5 of the Proposal Narrative, describe in detail the congregation's renewal activity plans.

- Average: 3-7 pages, but no page limit
- 1-inch margins
- Double spaced
- 12 pt. font in Times New Roman or similar serif font
- Number pages beginning at 1

1-Page Church Operating Budget Summary: Provide a one-page summary of the church's current year operating budget. You may include either a single page spreadsheet or typewritten page. This should include a financial overview of the church's current year income and expenses. It should summarize major categories of income and expenditures within the congregation. For example, it may include staff compensation, building costs, benevolence, mission giving, and income from offerings to name a few.

Tax Status & Signatures Form: This required fillable form is available for download from our [landing page](#) under Step 3: Download & Review the Form. Complete this form, providing the requested information concerning your congregation's tax-exempt status under federal law. Then print a copy and add the required ink-signatures. Christian Theological Seminary is required by federal tax law to determine the exempt status of each organization to which it makes a grant. Therefore, it is necessary that you supply this information to establish that your congregation is exempt from the payment of federal

Budget Narratives: Write a Budget Narrative that provides a detailed breakdown of the expenses for the renewal plan in date order. Include one for the pastor's budget and one for the congregation's budget. The budget narratives should provide clear explanation for how costs were determined. They should also identify specific activities, the number of people, and the amount of time covered by each budgeted item.

"Start planning and communicating early. We started our planning almost a year in advance; we needed the time. And have fun!"

- Past Clergy Renewal Grant Recipient

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income taxes under the Internal Revenue Code (“Code”) section 501(c)(3) and is a church as described in Code section 170(b)(1)(A)(i). The Responsible Officer who signs this form may not be a paid church staff person or relative of the Leave-taking Pastor. The Responsible Officer must be a lay leader of the congregation **authorized to sign financial documents** on the congregation’s behalf.

Please carefully review the Acknowledgments and provide ink signatures as noted on the form indicating that you understand and agree with the statement. By providing their ink signature, the **Treasurer** acknowledges they have reviewed and support the budgets submitted with this proposal.

Federal Tax-Exempt Status Documents: Gather the appropriate documents as noted below and place in the order indicated in the Proposal PDF Checklist on page 19. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) determination letters are reissued periodically, especially in the case of group exemptions. Include **only the most recent version** of the letter. State issued sales and use tax exemption certificates are not acceptable forms of documentation. Do not include these with your proposal. No grants will be awarded, or funds dispersed, until acceptable federal tax status is confirmed by one of the following options:

1. **IRS determination letter:** The IRS issues a determination letter which states that, according to the description of federally tax-exempt organizations, the named church has been determined to qualify under the statute as a church and is therefore exempt from federal income tax.
2. **Denomination’s Group Exemption Ruling determination letter:** Like the determination letter described above, this letter is issued to the denomination either regionally or nationally. If you include a group exemption ruling letter of determination with your proposal, you will need to also include evidence of your active participation with the denomination mentioned in the group ruling letter. Choose from one of the following three options:

- A. a photocopy or scan of the denomination’s yearbook cover page and the page on which your church is listed or
- B. a screenshot of the church’s listing from the denomination’s website or
- C. a letter from the denomination that states the congregation is covered under the group ruling, is an active part of the denomination, and includes the church name and physical address.

3. **Letter from Legal Counsel:** If the congregation does not have an individual or group exemption ruling determination letter from the IRS, include a letter written and ink signed by legal counsel that verifies that the congregation is a church according to the description given in IRS Code sections 501(c)(3) and 170(b)(1)(A)(i).

Leave-taking Pastor’s Letter of Standing: Enclose an ink signed letter printed on letterhead from the congregation’s judicatory indicating the pastor’s good standing as a minister in their denomination. Judicatory officials should be advised of the expectation that, if the congregation’s proposal is selected, the pastor will continue to serve the congregation that receives the grant for at least one year after the end of the renewal program. If the applying congregation is independent and not a member of any denominational body, we require one of the following options in place of a judicatory letter:

- If the congregation belongs to a fellowship of churches, provide an ink signed letter printed on letterhead from an officer of the fellowship that attests to the congregation’s participation in the fellowship and the pastor’s good standing.
- If the congregation is independent and not a member of any denominational body or fellowship, the governing board of the church must provide an ink signed letter attesting to the pastor’s standing as an ordained minister in the congregation.

“The most prevalent impact on the congregation was that we bonded beyond any expectations we could have had. By working together and intentionally putting God and the church first, we grew as one and accomplished things that we were not sure were possible.”

— Past Clergy Renewal Grant Recipient

Writing 11> Return Form

Applicant's Federal Tax-Exempt Status & Signatures Form

Refer to page 9-10 in the Request for Proposals document for detailed instructions on completing this form and providing the correct documents. The fillable version of this form can be downloaded from our landing page or by scanning the QR code below.

Christian Theological Seminary is required by law and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations to determine the exempt status of each organization to which it makes a grant. Therefore, it is necessary that you provide the following information to establish that your congregation is exempt from the payment of federal income taxes under IRS Revenue Code ("Code") section 501(c)(3) and is a church as described in Code section 170(b)(1)(A)(i).

Organization's legal name

Organization's common name (if different from legal name)

Congregation's street address and mailing address, if different

Responsible Officer of the congregation's signature

Print Name

Responsible Officer's title

No grants will be awarded until the proper tax status is confirmed.



USE THE
FILLABLE
FORM AT
THIS LINK

Acknowledgments & Signatures

By giving their signatures below, the Congregational Representative, Leave-taking Pastor, and Senior Minister acknowledge the following:

I am duly authorized to represent this congregation and submit this proposal on its behalf. I affirm, to the best of my knowledge, that the information contained in the proposal is true and accurate. My signature indicates that the congregation is fully aware of this proposal, approves its submission, and is prepared to accept a grant from Christian Theological Seminary if selected. If a Clergy Renewal grant is awarded, the congregation commits to continue the pastor's full salary and benefits during the renewal program. I further affirm our intent for our Leave-taking Pastor to serve this congregation for at least one year after the end of the renewal program. In addition, **I acknowledge the grant is not portable and can only be used while the Leave-taking Pastor serves this congregation that has applied for the grant.**

Congregational Representative's signature

Date

Leave-taking Pastor's signature

Date

Senior Minister's signature (only if not the Leave-taking Pastor)

Date

By giving their signature below, **the Treasurer acknowledges** they have reviewed and support the budgets submitted with this proposal.

Treasurer's signature

Date

Submitting the Proposal

CTS now provides an online portal for submitting Clergy Renewal proposals. The portal opens on December 1, 2025, and closes with the application deadline at 11:59 pm EDT on Wednesday, March 18, 2026. All proposals submitted by eligible congregations receive equal consideration in the review process. CTS encourages applicants to gather the worksheets, previously prepared proposal PDF, and the link for the video response to A8 (if including) before initiating the online application process.

Visit our [landing page](#) and scroll to Step 5 or scan the QR code on page 19 to access the online portal. No login or account is needed to access the portal. If the application isn't completed in a single session, be sure to click the "save and next" button at the bottom right of the screen before navigating away from the page or closing the browser window. This saves the information entered up to that point. If the proposal is not completed in a single session, you may return to it from the Apply for Grant page in the portal and enter the information for the Primary Contact Person. Enter the six-digit verification code the system sends to the Primary Contact's email address.

"It is crucial for the pastor to consider what he or she hopes to achieve by this experience. The proposal process helped me to think this through."

— Past Clergy Renewal Grant Recipient

- Once the online application and file upload are complete and the "Submit" button clicked, no further edits can be made to the proposal. An onscreen message will confirm the proposal was submitted for processing by the Clergy Renewal staff.
- All congregations who submit a complete proposal as described on p. 13 will receive a system-generated confirmation email once the proposal has been processed and assigned to a review team. If you do not receive the system-generated email by 5 weeks after the proposal deadline, send the Clergy Renewal Program staff an email to ensure your proposal was processed.
- CTS encourages the Leave-taking Pastor, Congregational Representative, and Responsible Officer to add the following email address to their "safe sender" list: ClergyRenewal@cts.edu.

The worksheets on the following pages correspond to a series of pages in the online application portal. They are provided to aid you in gathering the required details and simplifying the online data entry process. The online portal requires you to identify a Primary Contact including an email address. The person designated as the **Primary Contact** is the person who will complete most or all the online application. They are not required or expected to be the Leave-taking Pastor or other named person in the proposal forms or documents. The access code needed to return to the application will be sent to this email address if the application will be completed in more than one session.

Submission 13> Worksheets

Worksheets

Contacts Information Worksheet: For the congregation's general email address, please provide an email different from that of the Leave-taking Pastor. The Employer Identification Number is a nine-digit number issued by the Internal Revenue Service that appears in the following format: XX-XXXXXXX. When selecting a Congregational Representative and Responsible Officer, please keep the following criteria in mind:

- The same person may serve as both the Congregational Representative and the Responsible Officer if they meet the criteria for both roles.
- Neither the Congregational Representative nor the Responsible Officer may be a relative of the leave-taking pastor. They may not be another pastor who serves the congregation or paid staff.
- Both the Congregational Representative and Responsible Officer must be lay leaders of the congregation.
- The Responsible Officer must be a lay leader of the congregation authorized to sign financial documents on the congregation's behalf.

Congregation & Pastor Information Worksheet: If the congregation's exact founding date is unknown, provide your best estimate. For number of members and average number at worship, please use one number and not a number range (ex.: 112, not 110-115).



Renewal Program Outline Worksheet: Provide a chronological outline of the pastor's proposed renewal program as described in detail in your Proposal Narrative. In providing the outline, be sure to include all time intended as part of the pastor's renewal leave including time at home, noting travel companions where appropriate. In the "Highlights" field, include key details for the leave period like time spent at home and key activities planned for the designated period. The online portal provides 10 sets of fields. Each set may cover multiple weeks. It is not necessary to use all 10. Adjust the amount of detail included here as needed. The portal allows you to paste text from a Word file or Google doc. You may find it helpful to compose the "travel companion" and/or "highlight" sections in a separate word processing document and use the copy/paste feature to simplify completing these fields in the portal.

Pastor's & Congregation's Budget Worksheets: Review pages 8-9 for details and/or restrictions about some of the budget categories. Ensure that the amounts entered on the worksheet for each budget category and the totals match the entries in the portal.

Complete Proposal includes:

1. **Primary Contact first and last name and email address**
2. **Completed worksheets**
 - Contacts Information Worksheet
 - Congregation & Pastor Information Worksheet
 - Renewal Program Outline Worksheet
 - Pastor's & Congregation's Budget Worksheets
3. **Proposal PDF ready to upload**
4. **Optional: URL link for video response to A8**

Submission 14> Worksheets

Contacts Information

Congregation legal name

Congregation common name (if different)

Website URL (if any)

Congregation's phone number

Congregation's general email address

Employer identification number (EIN)

Congregation's street address

City

State

ZIP Code

Congregation's mailing address

Leave-taking Pastor's title and full name (ex. Rev. Dr. Mari Lloyd)

Leave-taking Pastor's role (ex. Worship Pastor)

Preferred phone number

Preferred email address

Congregational Representative's title and full name

Congregational Representative's role (ex. deacon)

Preferred phone number

Preferred email address

Responsible Officer of the congregation title and full name

Responsible Officer's role (ex. congregation's president)

Preferred phone number

Preferred email address

Senior pastor's title and full name (only needed if different than Leave-taking Pastor)

Preferred phone number

Preferred email address

Treasurer's full name

Email Address

Preferred phone number

Preferred email address

Submission 15> Worksheets

Congregation & Pastor Information

Official name of denomination or indicate if congregation is nondenominational or independent

Date congregation founded

Annual operating budget

Number of members

Average number at worship

Years pastor has served this congregation

First day of proposed renewal leave:_____ Last day of proposed renewal leave:_____

Is the renewal leave planned as a: ☐ single time span ☐ multiple spans

How many total weeks is the proposed renewal leave:_____

How did you hear about the program?

☐ Friend/colleague ☐ News story ☐ CTS website ☐ Other website ☐ Social media ☐ Other (explain below)

Is the pastor bi-vocational? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what are the average number of hours per week devoted to serving this congregation? _____

Submission 16> Worksheets

Renewal Program Outline Worksheet

Refer to page 13 for detailed information about the Renewal Program Outline Worksheet pages and the Renewal Program Outline section of the portal. Keep in mind the fullest description of the renewal leave should be provided with the Proposal Narrative.

1	Leave	Start Date	End Date	Leave Highlights
		Destination		
		Travel Companions		
2	Leave	Start Date	End Date	Leave Highlights
		Destination		
		Travel Companions		
3	Leave	Start Date	End Date	Leave Highlights
		Destination		
		Travel Companions		
4	Leave	Start Date	End Date	Leave Highlights
		Destination		
		Travel Companions		
5	Leave	Start Date	End Date	Leave Highlights
		Destination		
		Travel Companions		

Submission 17> Worksheets

6 Leave

Start Date	End Date	Leave Highlights
Destination		
Travel Companions		

7 Leave

Start Date	End Date	Leave Highlights
Destination		
Travel Companions		

8 Leave

Start Date	End Date	Leave Highlights
Destination		
Travel Companions		

9 Leave

Start Date	End Date	Leave Highlights
Destination		
Travel Companions		

10 Leave

Start Date	End Date	Leave Highlights
Destination		
Travel Companions		

Submission 18> Worksheets

Budget Worksheets

Round to the nearest dollar. The online version of these worksheets in the portal will calculate the totals. Please ensure the totals at the bottom of each page in the portal matches your own calculations.

Include only those expenses related to the pastor's renewal program that will be covered by Clergy Renewal Program grant funds. If you anticipate using funds from other sources in addition to CRP grant funds, do not include those amounts as part of this budget, but be sure to provide explanation of those funds in the pastor's Budget Narrative.

Pastor's Budget Worksheet

Enter amounts without commas or cents

Only enter amounts covered by CRP grant funds

Travel

Airfare \$ _____

Automobile expenses:

Personal car mileage _____

Car rental costs and gasoline
(# miles x IRS rate/mile) _____

Other ground transportation _____

Meals and lodging _____

Tuition or coursework fees _____

Books _____

Telephone _____

Postage _____

Equipment and supplies _____
(max amt 10% of pastor's budget)

Other (passports, inoculations,
entrance fees, etc.) _____

**Estimated increase in tax liability
as a result of receiving grant** _____
(optional; explain how this amt was
calculated in the pastor's budget narrative*)

Total \$ _____

Congregation's Budget Worksheet

Maximum Congregational Budget: \$20,000

Enter amounts without commas or cents

Only enter amounts covered by CRP grant funds

Pulpit supply and / or interim staff

Honoraria \$ _____

Travel and lodging _____

Benefits _____

**Congregational events relating to pastor's
leave-taking and return** _____

Congregational renewal activities _____
Please explain fully in Proposal Narrative,
Part A, and in budget narrative.

Other _____

Total \$ _____

*Pastors should work with the congregation's treasurer and/or personal tax adviser to determine the potential impact of this grant on the pastor's personal income tax. When determining the potential tax impact, note that the grant will be paid by Christian Theological Seminary to the congregation, not directly to the pastor. Please note that CTS and LEI will not provide advice about the tax implications of grant awards.

Proposal PDF Checklist

Place the proposal elements in the following order in the PDF document.

Title the proposal PDF as follows: 2026 [Leave-taking Pastor's first and last name] Proposal. For example, 2026 James Markoff Proposal. Upload the proposal PDF on the final page of the online portal.

1. ☐ Proposal Narrative
(pages numbered 1-10)
2. ☐ Pastor and Congregation Budget Narratives
(pages numbered beginning with 1)
3. ☐ 1-page Church Operating Budget Summary
4. ☐ Tax Status & Signatures Form
(ensure ink signatures are present)
5. ☐ Federal Tax-Exempt documentation
6. ☐ Pastor's Letter of Standing

If you do not have a scanner, your local office supply or print/ship can create a PDF of your proposal for a per page fee. You can have them scan it to a USB storage device or email it to you.

CONTACT US

Please reach out to us with any questions not answered in this document or on the website. Christian Theological Seminary is in Indianapolis, IN, which is in the Eastern time zone. Please keep that in mind when calling. If you leave a voice message, please include details regarding your inquiry.

We will gladly schedule time for a phone call. Please email us at the address below with your availability and include the questions for which you're seeking answers.

Office hours: M – F, 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM.

Email: ClergyRenewal@cts.edu

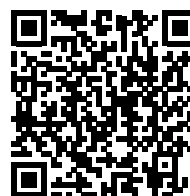
Phone: (317) 931-4225

Guidelines

Christian Theological Seminary strives to give fair and thoughtful attention to each proposal submitted for this program. In order to do so, the proposals must be comparable in length and sequence. For these reasons, CTS reminds pastors and congregations to be sure that their proposals meet the minimum requirements noted below and in the checklist.

This list summarizes information shared throughout this Request for Proposals. Only proposals that meet the following standards will be considered:

1. The complete Proposal Narrative includes numbered responses to Parts A, B, and C where the numbered response corresponds with the section and number of the prompt. For example A1 or C2.
2. For ease of readability, both the Budget and Proposal Narrative portions of the proposal must use 12-pt. Times New Roman or similar serif font (for detailed information, refer to the Budget Narratives or Proposal Narrative section).
3. Budget and Proposal Narratives must use 1-inch margins and be double-spaced.
4. The Proposal Narrative may be a maximum of 10 pages.
5. The Tax Status & Signatures form must be the one provided on the [landing page](#) of our website under Step 3 and must be for the National Clergy Renewal Program. Proposals that include a form other than the one provided may be deemed ineligible. Be sure the form you use is for the current program year.
6. Do not include with your proposal any photographs, brochures, articles, or other items not expressly requested in this Request for Proposals document. Proposals that include such items may be considered ineligible.



APPLY
ONLINE

LILLY ENDOWMENT

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.

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

CTS is a fully accredited ecumenical seminary and is 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 faculty and students.



WHAT
WILL
MAKE
YOUR
HEART
SING?



CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY