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October 27, 2023



The Synod of the Covenant

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The Synod of the Covenant, in partnership with Alma College, Johnson C. Smith Seminary, and the Presbytery of Cincinnati, has received a grant of \$1.25 million from Lilly Endowment Inc. to help establish the *Cultivating the Gift of Preaching* initiative.

The program is being funded through Lilly Endowment's Compelling Preaching Initiative. The aim of the initiative is to foster and support preaching that inspires, encourages and guides people to come to know and love God and to live out their Christian faith more fully.

Cultivating the Gift of Preaching will identify, train, and support emergent preachers within the Synod of the Covenant to equip them for sustainable ministry and to strengthen the Church's witness to the good news of the Gospel in Jesus Christ. Since a large and increasing number of the churches within the Synod – indeed, throughout the Christian world – are served by preachers who have not yet experienced rigorous homiletical or theological training, this program will lead to more compelling proclamation in all eleven of the Synod's presbyteries and in many of its 650 churches.

Synod Executive Chip Hardwick is enthusiastic about this ministry: "Faithful elders and other leaders preach faithfully, Sunday after Sunday, in so many of our churches. *Cultivating the Gift of Preaching* will answer their longing for more training, including monthly cohort groups, annual conferences, and spiritual practices. Our partnership with Alma College, Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary, and the Presbytery of Cincinnati will be the foundation of what we pray the Spirit will use to transform the Synod."

The Synod of the Covenant is one of 81 organizations receiving grants through this competitive round of the Compelling Preaching Initiative. Reflecting the diversity of Christianity in the United States, the organizations are affiliated with mainline Protestant, evangelical, Catholic, Orthodox, Anabaptist and Pentecostal faith communities. Many of the organizations are rooted in the Black Church and in Hispanic and Asian American Christian traditions.



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“Throughout history, preachers often have needed to adapt their preaching practices to engage new generations of hearers more effectively,” said Christopher L. Coble, Lilly Endowment’s vice president for religion. “We are pleased that the organizations receiving grants in this initiative will help pastors and others in ministry engage in the kinds of preaching needed today to ensure that the gospel message is heard and accessible for all audiences.”

Lilly Endowment launched the Compelling Preaching Initiative in 2022 because of its interest in supporting projects that help to nurture the religious lives of individuals and families and foster the growth and vitality of Christian congregations in the United States.

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 and maintains a special commitment to its 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.