



Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Receives Grant from Lilly Endowment

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod has received a \$1, 070,392 grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to help establish a program called “Love Revolution: Love God and Love Neighbor – A Thriving Congregations Initiative program.”

Over the next five years the Love Revolution will work with a cohort of congregations and their lay leaders to deepen their faith and discipleship and serve the needs of their community. As we imagine the church we are becoming post-pandemic, we will help congregations focus on this core teaching of Jesus: love God and love neighbor. Love Revolution will help congregations evolve from an institutional church built on programs and resources into a missional church built on relationships and service.

The project is being funded through Lilly Endowment’s Thriving Congregations Initiative. The aim of the initiative to encourage the flourishing of congregations by helping them deepen their relationships with God, enhance their connections with each other, and contribute to the vitality of their communities and the world.

“We are grateful to receive a grant to assist in building the beloved community here in Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod. We are blessed that Lilly Endowment Inc., has entrusted us through this grant to support Love Revolution: Love God and Love Neighbor – A Thriving Congregations Initiative program,” said Bishop Patricia A. Davenport. “We trust and pray that this might be a model that causes a ripple effect of God’s love across the nation.”

“I hope that the Love Revolution will be a game changer for congregations as we help them focus on the critical work of congregational vitality,” said The Rev. Bryan Penman, Co-Director of Evangelical Mission for Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod is one of 105 organizations that has received grants through a competitive round of the Thriving Congregations Initiative. Reflecting a wide variety of Christian traditions, the organizations represent mainline Protestant, evangelical, Catholic, Orthodox, peace church and Pentecostal faith communities.

“Congregations play an essential role in deepening the faith of individuals and contributing to the vitality of communities,” said Christopher L. Coble, Lilly Endowment’s vice president for religion. “We hope that these programs will nurture the vibrancy and spark the creativity of congregations, helping them imagine new ways to share God’s love in their communities and across the globe.”

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.

About the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) serves 140 faith communities and nearly 70,000 baptized members in Philadelphia and Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery Counties. The synod's name derives from Greek and means "on the road together." It walks with faith communities and leaders to help congregations revitalize their ministries, nurture new forms of faith community, identify and form future leaders for the church, develop youth and young adult leaders, and share their unique stories.