



## **Heritage Theological Seminary receives Pathways for Tomorrow Grant**

*October 20, 2025* - Heritage Theological Seminary has received a grant of \$952,669USD from Lilly Endowment Inc. to appoint a dedicated staff member to revitalize and expand the Integrated Practicum program, ensuring students receive a more enriching experience and intentional preparation for ministry. This grant will also help Heritage to employ a professional to develop and implement systems that optimize the use of campus facilities. This role will focus on maximizing space utilization, stewarding the resources entrusted to us, and alleviating financial pressures on students by generating additional revenue while we work to grow our student body. As part of this grant, Heritage will continue our partnership with VisionWheel to enhance our digital presence, expand the functionality of our website, and finalize a refreshed brand identity. And finally, invest in a comprehensive evaluation of our mission and operational systems to assess effectiveness. This initiative will help us communicate our impact to external stakeholders, demonstrate the value of their support, and ultimately grow our donor base.

The work is being funded through Lilly Endowment's Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative, which is intended to help theological schools across the United States and Canada strengthen their educational and financial capacities to prepare and support pastoral leaders for Christian congregations both now and into the future.

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada reports that evangelical churches need 623 new pastors annually to offset retirements and attrition. Serving about 10% of this constituency, Heritage should be producing roughly 60 new pastors each year but currently graduates only about 20 who enter or continue in pastoral leadership. To meet this need, Heritage launched HeritageNEXT (December 2024–March 2025), a strategic visioning process supported by the Pathways for Tomorrow grant, engaging board members, faculty, staff, pastors, denominational leaders, donors, and partners through consultations and surveys. Stakeholders affirmed Heritage's strengths in biblical faithfulness, Christ-centered mission, and supportive community, while identifying the need for stronger ministry preparedness, leadership development, program innovation,

and church partnerships. In response, Heritage plans to establish the Integrated Practicum Project, a joint initiative with church and denominational partners to create an integrated education model combining theological training with practical, in-church experience. This collaborative model will use real-time feedback between churches and classrooms to ensure relevant preparation and greater resilience among graduates. Led by an Integrated Practicum Director, supported by data systems and communication resources, the project aims to engage more churches in developing future leaders and to triple the number of graduates entering pastoral ministry—positioning Heritage to play a national role in addressing Canada’s pastoral leadership crisis.

**“We are grateful for the opportunity to begin to plan for this project in detail. We are excited about the impact it can have on our school’s future.” – Jonathan Griffiths, Chancellor, Heritage College & Seminary.**

Heritage Theological Seminary is one of 163 theological schools that have received grants since 2021 through the Pathways initiative. Together, the schools serve a broad spectrum of Christian traditions in the U.S. and Canada. They are affiliated with evangelical, mainline Protestant, nondenominational, Pentecostal, Orthodox, Catholic, Black church, Latino, Asian American, Indigenous and historic peace church traditions.

“Theological schools have long played a central role for most denominations and church networks in preparing and supporting pastoral leaders who guide congregations,” said Christopher L. Coble, the Endowment’s vice president for religion. “These schools are paying close attention to the challenges churches are facing today and will face in the foreseeable future. The grants will help these schools engage in wide-ranging, innovative efforts to adapt their educational programs and build their financial capacities so they can better prepare pastors and lay ministers to effectively lead the congregations they will serve in the future.”

### **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 religion and lift up in fair, accurate and balanced ways the roles that people of all faiths and various religious communities play in the United State and around the globe.