



EVANGELICAL  
COVENANT  
CHURCH

# SUSTAINING PASTORAL EXCELLENCE





*The Sustaining Pastoral Excellence initiative exists to connect pastors, missionaries, and chaplains in the Evangelical Covenant Church with the resources necessary to sustain them throughout their ministerial journey.*

# HISTORY

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Sustaining Pastoral Excellence was born of a dream more than six years ago. A group of individuals from many parts of the Evangelical Covenant Church family desired to bring together an initiative that would take to heart the needs and desires of our pastors, missionaries, and chaplains. Thanks to a generous grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc., and continued support from across the Covenant, SPE has become an important thread woven into the fabric of the Church. The initiative works out of the Covenant's Department of the Ordered Ministry with the express purpose of resourcing the ministerial community in the areas of character, competence, and constancy. Sustaining Pastoral Excellence provides grants and facilitates events, retreats and learning communities for ministers across North America, while also partnering with Covenant World Mission to resource those serving on the mission field.

# CHARACTER

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Our character as Christians – and as vocational ministers – is deeply rooted in a Christ-defined identity that recognizes God’s working in every area of our lives. SPE connects ministers with resources for spiritual direction, a ministry through which they can ultimately deepen their friendship with God. A spiritual director serves as a companion in discerning God’s activity and leading in a person’s life.

Through the growth of the Center for Spiritual Direction at North Park Theological Seminary, and the emerging networks of Covenant Spiritual Directors in regional conferences, pastors and laity are being transformed by this life-changing ministry.

*See the Grant Grid on page 10 for further details.*

*Yet, O LORD, you are our Father.  
We are the clay, you are the potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.  
Isaiah 64:8*



## *The ministry of spiritual direction...*



*Above: Center for Spiritual Direction Graduates, Summer 2008*

“At the advice of mentors, I sought out a spiritual director, and through this unique ministry I began to regain the intimacy of my relationship with Christ and the fire of my calling was re-ignited. ... Because of spiritual directions’ profound effect on my walk with Christ, I wanted to expose my congregation to this unique ministry experience. I was accepted in the Center for Spiritual Direction ... and for the past three years have watched my church’s and my relationship with Christ grow even deeper.”

*- D. Darrell Griffin, IL*

“‘Amazing love’ captures the essence of my testimony regarding the process of the program and learning Spiritual Direction. ... Learning to listen in a contemplative way... Seeing Christ in the face of friend and stranger, and even in myself... Becoming more aware of those who

are not heard, those who have no voice... Being given the gift of this training and preparation for spiritual direction ministry, a gift whose value is increased as it is shared!” - *Janice Kelly, Mexico*

“I am deeply grateful for this opportunity. If pastors are willing to make formation a priority in their own lives it will sustain pastoral excellence. I am proud to be a part of a denomination that wants to help their pastors make it in ministry long-term. I feel loved and supported...” - *Sean Blomquist, CA, received a grant to participate in personal spiritual direction*

# COMPETENCE

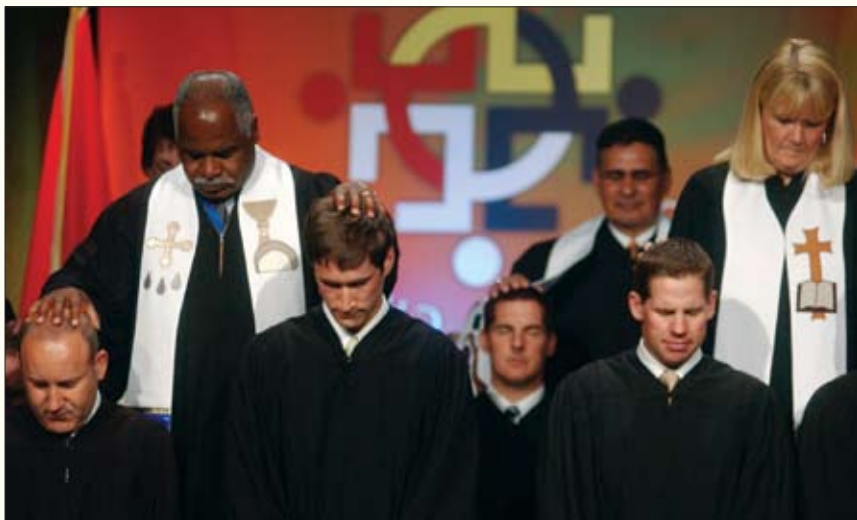
Excellence requires a commitment to life-long learning. This commitment in the ministerial role calls for proactive attention to the core pastoral arts of preaching, teaching, leading and caring. SPE provides the resources which allows Covenant ministers to maintain sharp focus on these core functions – including providing grants for ministers to participate in self-selected learning experiences (seminars, workshops, learning journeys, etc.). *See the Grant Grid on page 10 for further details.*

The SPE initiative has also begun to launch cohorts - or learning communities. Over the past few years, groups of pastors from around the country have come together to learn for 9 months around one of the core pastoral arts.

*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a person who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

*2 Timothy 2:15*





### *Preaching, Leading, Teaching, Caring...*

“The past year has been so filled with my own health troubles and multiple tragedies that I was not looking forward to this seminar—I was just coming. The subjects were so important and heavy, but it was presented in such an enjoyable way. I am excited and filled with hope. Thank you!”

*- Participant at the Emotionally Healthy Spirituality seminar in Spring 2009*

“When I reread the 35 pages of notes I took at the conference, I realize that they can become for me a devotional tool to be used over and over again. ... Thank you for this opportunity.. I am grateful.” *- Participant in The Festival of Homiletics conference through a self-selected competence grant*

# CONSTANCY

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Faithfulness, longevity, and fidelity are nurtured through a personal state of wellness – issuing out of a vital relationship with Jesus Christ. The opportunity for pastors to take intentional time away from their ministries to focus on their own relationship with Christ is crucial.

*See the Grant Grid on page 10 for further details.*

*...let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*

*Hebrews 12:1*



## *Pause... Renew... Receive...*

“This regular rhythm of taking a week-long breather has really impacted my endurance in ministry. I come back to my people rested, full and full of stories of Jesus...” - *Win Jackson-Hourwen, CO, received a self-selected renewal retreat grant*

“It is so important for pastors to step back from their life and work and give it back to God, to see it from His perspective, and to hear his voice.” - *Re-visitinng Retreat Participant*

“This sense of peacefulness that I left my retreat with was a gift that I will remember and take with me. ...I am reminded of the need for on-going reflection and solitude.” - *Ted Yuen, WA, received a self-selected renewal retreat grant*

“The first morning I was blessed with an overwhelming sense that Jesus would meet me and fill me, overwhelm me with his love. Thank you for letting me find this place, to be so blessed and restored with the love of Jesus!” - *Re-visitinng Retreat Participant*

“I am so incredibly grateful for the SPE grant I received ... for six Sabbath retreats over the course of 12 months. I found places where I found God anew. I came back from each retreat refreshed and energized!” - *Jim Eaton, KS, received a self-selected renewal retreat grant*



# GRANTS AVAILABLE THROUGH SUSTAINING PASTORAL EXCELLENCE

	CHARACTER	COMPETENCE	CONSTANCY
Self Selected	Receiving Spiritual Direction: <i>\$500 for 1 year</i>  Spiritual Direction Training Programs: <i>\$900 for 1 year, renewable for a second year</i>	Personal Learning Experiences: <i>up to \$900</i>  Group Learning: <i>up to \$5000</i>	Personal Renewal Retreats (2-5 days): <i>up to \$900</i>  Group Retreats: <i>up to \$5000</i>
Covenant Created	Training at the North Park Theological Seminary Center for Spiritual Direction: <i>Tuition offset and travel scholarship</i>	Learning Cohorts: <i>Full retreat costs plus travel allowance</i>	Re-visioning Retreats: <i>Full retreat costs plus travel allowance</i>
Conference Match Grants	Retreats for Conference Spiritual Directors	Conference-led Learning Seminars	Sabbath Retreats

## GRANT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. Ministers that have at least two years of ministry experience and are currently active in a full-time pastoral, chaplaincy, or mission ministry through the Evangelical Covenant Church are eligible to apply.
2. Ministers must hold one of the following Covenant credentials\*:
  - Ordained to Word and Sacrament
  - Ordained to Specialized Ministry
  - Commissioned Staff Minister
  - Consecrated Missionary
  - Ministry License
  - World Mission License

*\* Bi-Vocational Covenant ministers who have completed the Vocational Excellence class should contact the Director of Sustaining Pastoral Excellence for eligibility information.*
3. All ministerial association dues must be current for the last two years.



*For more information on grants available through the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence initiative please visit [www.covchurch.org/spe](http://www.covchurch.org/spe) or email [spe@covchurch.org](mailto:spe@covchurch.org).*



## WOULD YOU LIKE TO PARTNER WITH SUSTAINING PASTORAL EXCELLENCE?

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Serving the community of Covenant pastors, missionaries, and chaplains through the resources of SPE is only made possible through partnerships with individuals and other groups committed to the health and excellence of the ministerial community. If you would like to donate to the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence initiative, please contact the Department of the Ordered Ministry, or email [spe@covchurch.org](mailto:spe@covchurch.org).



*For more information on the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence initiative, including available grants, please visit [www.covchurch.org/spe](http://www.covchurch.org/spe) or email [spe@covchurch.org](mailto:spe@covchurch.org).*