



## PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY RECEIVES LILLY ENDOWMENT INC. GRANT TO CONTINUE THE MINISTRY OF ALUMNUS “MISTER” FRED ROGERS

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary has received a grant of \$1.25 million from Lilly Endowment Inc. to help establish the Faith Forming Families Network (F3 Network), an innovation lab that will “rebuild the neighborhood”—one of mutual care and flourishing as envisioned by our most notable alumnus the Rev. “Mister” Fred Rogers ’62.

The project is being funded through Lilly Endowment’s Christian Parenting and Caregiving Initiative. The aim of the initiative is to help parents and caregivers share their faith and values with their children.

One crucial challenge facing families and communities involved in the spiritual formation (faith) and moral development (character) of children is the disconnect between the parents, elders, and caregivers (families) who engage their children in the home, and pastors, teachers, and



leaders who engage children in churches, schools, and social organizations. Connection, conversation, and collaboration between those who engage children in the home and those who engage them elsewhere allows for effective spiritual formation and moral development. Therefore, the Faith Forming Families will reconnect families and communities as partners in the spiritual formation and moral development of young people, and empower them to define the problems they face for themselves and to discern solutions they will implement together. The F3 Network will invite its partners and participants to listen, learn, and lead with one another in order to pilot new programs and prototype new practices of spiritual formation and moral development for young people.

“The Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Neighborhood Collaborative, six externally-facing programs at PTS, allows the Seminary to convene conversations and collaborations between congregations, organizations, and citizens; provides education and formation for discipleship, leadership, and citizenship; and advocates for truth, justice, and hope in church and society. With these grant monies Pittsburgh Seminary can also collaborate on building upon the legacy of Mister Rogers’ most fundamental commitment: that ‘every child should be loved exactly as they are,’” said the Rev. Dr. Asa J. Lee, president of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. “We’re excited about the opportunity to continue our ‘theology of neighbor’ in this way.”



Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is one of 77 organizations that are receiving grants through this competitive round of the Lilly Endowment initiative. Reflecting the diversity of Christianity in the United States, the organizations are affiliated with mainline Protestant, evangelical, Catholic, Orthodox Christian, and Pentecostal faith communities. Many of the organizations are rooted in Black church, Hispanic, and Asian Christian traditions.

“We’ve heard from many parents who are seeking to nurture the spiritual lives of their children, especially in their daily activities, and looking to churches and other faith-based organizations for support,” said Christopher L. Coble, Lilly Endowment’s vice president for religion.

“These thoughtful, creative and collaborative organizations embrace the important role that families have in shaping the religious development of children and are launching programs to assist parents and caregivers with this task.”

Lilly Endowment launched the Christian Parenting and Caregiving Initiative in 2022 because of its interest in supporting efforts to help individuals and families from diverse Christian communities draw more fully on the wisdom of Christian practices to live out their faith fully and well passing on a vibrant faith to a new generation.

### **About Pittsburgh Theological Seminary**

Rooted in the Reformed tradition and in relationship with Christ-followers from other traditions, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary forms and equips people for ministries familiar and yet to unfold and communities present and yet to be gathered. Pittsburgh Seminary forms culturally-competent and contextually-agile Christian leaders for church and society.

### **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.

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