The Center for Congregations’ northwest office is open.

A welcoming reception area greets visitors as they enter the new Center office, which will soon be home to the northwest director and administrative assistant. This office and staff are dedicated to serving congregations in Indiana’s northwest region, including towns from Remington to Gary and from East Chicago to Valparaiso.

Located in Crown Point, the office is at 9801 Connecticut Drive, off Broadway between the Merrillville and Crown Point exits on I-65. The facility includes work stations, meeting spaces, a browsing library and full kitchen. The 2,500-square-foot office is located in the Ameriplex at the Crossroads office park.

Serving Congregations
The Center has served northwest Indiana congregations for more than a year, through resource consulting, education events and more. The new office gives folks a space to peruse the latest resources and a gathering place for congregational meetings.

“Northwest congregations have already worked with the Center on all kinds of issues, and many of the congregations have attended our education events. Now, we’re pleased that this new office will allow even more engagement with congregations,” explained Center President Tim Shapiro.

Center office space is available free of charge to local congregations wanting to assemble off-site for meetings, board gatherings, staff retreats and more. Center staff hope that northwest Indiana congregations will make full use of the Center’s services.

A History of Good Work
The Center for Congregations began work in 1997 in the Indianapolis area, strengthening congregations by helping them find and use the best resources to address their challenges and opportunities. Offices in Fort Wayne, Evansville and Seymour opened in the last several years to work with congregations in the northeast, southwest and southeast portions of the state.

“Congregations in northwest Indiana are vibrant,” Shapiro said. “They are alive with meaning and ministry; adding so much to life in this part of the state. This hasn’t surprised us at all. It’s what we’ve found throughout Indiana.”

The Center is...
Funded by the Lilly Endowment Inc. and affiliated with the Alban Institute, the Center works with congregations on a variety of issues, from technology and visioning to building and stewardship. Center staff listen as congregational leaders identify the issues that are important to them. Services are tailored to meet the needs of local congregations. The Center also offers workshops, luncheon events, long-term learning programs and more.

The opening of this facility completes the Center’s establishment of regional offices. “The Center is now positioned to more fully serve congregations statewide,” Shapiro stated.

To contact the new northwest office, you can email info@centerforcongregations.org; call 219-472-4938; or fax 219-472-4941. We look forward to hearing from you.
Education Offerings Coming Together for Summer and Fall

We’re putting together an exciting line-up of education events for summer and fall. Here are a few of the offerings now available. Check our website for details, on-line registration and new additions to the line-up.

**Youth Activities that Teach and Reach**
Youth leaders know the importance of finding engaging and fun activities that provide meaningful instruction for their teens. In this luncheon workshop, participants are introduced to games and activities that are engaging, fun and support their ministry message. Led by Ritch Hochstetler and Erin Kempf of uLEAD, the workshop is Wednesday, August 3 in Fort Wayne.

**Effective Meetings in Your Congregation**
June Miller of the Indiana Nonprofit Resource Network facilitates this fast-paced, interactive workshop of easy-to-follow tools and guidelines to improve the results and maximize the benefits of any meeting. The luncheon workshop is Monday, August 15 in Vincennes.

**Understanding Faith and Giving**
Understanding philanthropy, giving trends and donor needs are all part of effective congregational stewardship and fundraising. Various leaders in the area of philanthropy present the latest information on faith and giving at this Evansville luncheon workshop series, which meets August 24, September 14 and October 5.

**A Practical Guide to Congregational Planning**
Thriving congregations have a sense of direction. Identifying that direction requires thoughtful reflection and intentional planning. In this workshop led by Center staff, planners Nancy DeMott and Tim Shapiro, participants learn a model of strategic planning and discover resources to help them use that model in their congregations. The luncheon is September 8 in Seymour.

**Essentials of Church Finance**
This is a practical workshop that looks at congregational accounting practices, planning and budgeting, internal controls, risk management and financial reporting. Led by Vonna Laue, partner with the accounting firm Capin Crouse, this event is September 21 in Fort Wayne and September 22 in Seymour.

**Congregational Management**
John Wimberly, pastor and author of *The Business of the Church*, speaks to the importance of being mindful of the details and skills required to manage the day-to-day and season-to-season business matters of congregational life. *Congregational Management* is September 29 in Lafayette and September 30 in Evansville.

**A Place of Welcome**
A leader in congregational growth and health, Gary McIntosh offers sound advice on assessing and improving the ways in which your congregation attracts people, welcomes them, follows-up, and brings them into the church family. The workshop is October 26 in Columbus; October 27 in Fort Wayne; and October 28 in northwest Indiana.

**Vibrant Music and Worship**
Take a look at the practical, theological and spiritual aspects of creating vibrant and meaningful worship and music in the small church. Minister and professor Bruce Epperly and composer and worship consultant Daryl Hollinger facilitate this event on November 3 in Evansville and November 4 in Mitchell.

For event details and on-line registration visit our website at [www.centerforcongregations.org](http://www.centerforcongregations.org)
What is the toughest problem faced by your congregation? Take a moment to think before you answer. Don’t think too long. Just for a moment. Name that problem. Imagine it.

Chances are that problem is hard to discuss. Chances are that problem has been around for a while. It is likely that skilled and well meaning leaders in your congregation have tried to fix this problem. And the fix didn’t stick.

In congregations (as in life) there are some problems that just don’t go away. Sometimes there is nothing we can do. Sometimes we have to learn to live with them.

Some congregations try a solution that worked somewhere else. We sometimes call this application a “best practice.” Unfortunately, most congregations are unique, and what works a certain way for one doesn’t always work for another.

At the Center for Congregations we have found that congregations are often open to an alternative other than learning to live with the problem or transferring a best practice that worked for someone else. This alternative involves offering the congregation a resource, not just any resource, but a resource that can be adapted by the congregation’s own ingenuity to their unique challenge.

Furthermore, the Center recommends such a resource only after a significant amount of listening to what is going on. It is sometimes as if a congregation can be listened into a better solution, a stronger future.

The world has plenty of experts, analysts, and advisers. This kind of help works when the challenge is not complex. What the Center offers is a way for a congregation to learn, be heard, and work from its God given assets rather than from someone else’s one answer fits all.

What is the toughest problem faced by your congregation? There are possibilities open to you. In the space between your congregation’s wisdom and the help you receive from outside resources and adapt to your own needs.

Give us a call. We’re ready to listen.
Our Mission
The Center for Congregations strengthens Indiana congregations by helping them find and use the best resources to address their challenges and opportunities.

Funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. Affiliated with the Alban Institute