





All improvements convey a common message:  
“You’re welcome to join us in worship.”

— Bethel AME Church, Bloomington

The Center works with congregations around all of their challenges and opportunities. Building issues are consistently top concerns for Indiana faith communities. Daily congregational life includes building maintenance, renovations and new projects for many Indiana congregations. Whether a church, parish, meeting or synagogue is new or old, urban or rural, facilities need attention.

We have found that helping congregations find the right resources to enhance facilities ultimately supports clarity about purpose and improves congregational capacity to deal with a variety of other challenges. A renovated sanctuary allows for new forms of worship. A new elevator demonstrates a commitment to greater hospitality. Art and aesthetics lead to an understanding of history and greater spirituality. Rebuilding after a fire or natural disaster provides a congregation the opportunity to resiliently dedicate resources to that which it cares most about.

In 2013, the four Indiana congregations featured in this report were among many which worked with the Center on building and a variety of other issues. We walked alongside 1016 congregations in 2013, offering resource consulting, grants and education events, thanks to funding from the Lilly Endowment Inc. The Center awarded more than \$1 million in grants and presented or hosted 152 educational and congregational gatherings. In 2013, we welcomed new northwest Director Katie Lindberg and said farewell to retiring northeast Director Brian Witwer. Our staff produced signature events like Flourishing Congregations in Muncie and the Youth Ministry Grants Initiative for central Indiana.



Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Carmel

Congregations are strong and vibrant communities. Indiana is home to many great stories of hope and inspiration and creativity. We invite you to walk these journeys with our featured faith communities, seeing the faces of congregational life through the photographs, as well as peruse our statistics and financial reports in this publication.

The Center for Congregations is proud to serve Indiana congregations and to help empower them for the future.

Tim Shapiro  
Center President



# FACILITY ENHANCEMENTS CONVEY A MESSAGE OF WELCOME

The Rev. Dennis Laffoon vividly recalls the Sunday morning in July when members of Bloomington's Bethel AME Church first experienced their new sound system. "It blew us away," he says with a laugh. "In fact, a man came in off the street during break time and said, 'I had no plans to attend anybody's church today but I was walking down the street and heard the most wonderful sound coming from this building.'" The congregation broke out in spontaneous applause because the visitor's response "was more than we had imagined," says Laffoon.



Bethel AME Church, Bloomington

Bethel AME—the oldest predominately black faith community in the city—is one of several churches to receive grants from the Center for

Congregations to support projects that underscore congregational hospitality. Enhancements to facilities have helped remove physical barriers in Fort Wayne, instill appreciation for sacred art in Carmel, expand handicapped accessibility in Indianapolis and attract youthful worshippers in Bloomington. All improvements convey a common message: "You're welcome to join us in worship."

For Bethel's leaders, any outreach to the surrounding college community required them to update their 1922 building with equipment familiar to their techno-savvy neighbors. "We're a very old church with a very young congregation," Laffoon explains. "It doesn't make sense for students to be right down the street from us and have access to all forms of technology but to come to church and feel they're in the dark ages." Efforts to replace the sanctuary's inadequate lighting and add a computer, projector, screens and audio system faced two challenges. First, digital equipment is expensive; and second, young worshippers typically are on tight budgets. The opportunity to apply for a matching grant from the Center's Technology and Ministry Initiative offered a possible solution to both.

"We applied for \$30,000 and issued a challenge for members to provide the necessary match," says Laffoon. "We didn't care if they gave a dollar, a hundred dollars or a thousand; we just wanted them to participate. After a couple of meetings they started to make pledges. Then an anonymous donor stepped forward and took care of the rest."

Excitement built during the month-long installation period. Each Sunday morning, the congregation encountered and celebrated whatever new piece of equipment appeared in the sanctuary. Sound amplifiers that Laffoon describes as "gargantuan" were replaced by ones more powerful but less conspicuous. Two screens dropped down from the ceiling to project song lyrics and scripture readings. Recessed lighting could be dimmed or brightened from a central



control panel. A youthful tech team formed to explore and manage the new possibilities. This was all part of Laffoon's vision. "We loved the fact that so many young people attend church here, but we wanted them involved in a leadership capacity," he says. "Technology is something they've mastered."

The church's wish list has now expanded to include items that will complement the recent improvements. Carpet swatches are stacked on a bookcase shelf in Laffoon's office. A color other than the current red would better blend with the stained-glass windows, according to Laffoon, and some of the pews are in need of repairs. The congregation is poised to address these meaningful improvements in order to welcome its members, visitors and the community.

#### SHARING FAITH THROUGH ART

Similar to Bethel's congregation, members of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Carmel have witnessed the transformation of their sanctuary in increments, one week at a time. Skilled iconographers, working on scaffolds placed as high as five stories above floor level, are recreating the history of Christianity in panels throughout the worship area. The artists frequently continue their work during Sunday services as a way to educate parishioners about the traditional art form that is so integral to the Orthodox faith. Motorists traveling on 106th Street have stopped, first attracted by the building's Byzantine-style architecture and then fascinated by the interior painting in progress.

"I try to impress upon everyone that although the art is beautiful, that's not why we do it," explains Dean Maniakas, Holy Trinity's chanter. "The art strengthens our worship experience. An Orthodox service is not one dimensional; all five of the senses are stimulated. Iconography depicts the stories told in the Bible."

A resource grant of \$15,000 from the Center for Congregations helped initiate the design phase



Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Carmel

of the project. The parish council considered three iconographers and eventually settled on the seven-member team led by Dr. George Kordis of Greece. The other candidates "had good ideas, but they did their work on canvas in their studios and then affixed it to the walls like wallpaper," says Maniakas. "Although their work was beautiful, it didn't have the same flow as the art done right here on the surface. I once complimented Dr. Kordis, saying, 'This is so perfect!' He said, 'No, there are many mistakes—some intentional and some not. If it were perfect, it would be like music where all the notes have the same value. Because it is imperfect, it has a rhythm and a flow.' Consequently, your eyes continue to move with the images."

Holy Trinity, a part of the Indianapolis faith community since 1910, had iconography at its two previous locations, first on West Street and later at the corner of 40th and Pennsylvania streets. Because the expense of designing and constructing the new church resulted in some "donor fatigue," the congregation opted to delay adding interior appointments—a hand-carved screen at the altar and iconography on the walls—for four years. "We had stretched ourselves as a parish," explains Gail Zeheralis, secretary of the parish council.

When the time was right, church leaders announced a plan to add the finishing touches



in phases. They also decided to invite Central Indiana to share what Zeheralis calls the “once-in-a-lifetime opportunity” of watching a master iconographer at work. Tours of the sanctuary during the annual GreekFest attracted standing-room-only crowds, various news media reported on the project, and Kordis gave public presentations at Ball State University, Herron School of Art and Design and the University of Notre Dame. “None of us had ever seen this done before,” says Zeheralis. “It has been an educational experience not only for us, but for the community at large. New visitors to the church uniformly seemed amazed upon entering. The iconography transports a person. The work ‘fits’ the faith.”



Plymouth Congregational Church, Fort Wayne

#### GIVING MINISTRY A LIFT

If members of Fort Wayne’s Plymouth Congregational Church hesitated to replace their aging elevator last year, it was for all the right reasons. The cost—estimated at \$175,000—was high; construction hadn’t been factored into the annual budget; and the congregation tended to direct its funds to ministry programs rather than bricks and mortar projects. But it was the emphasis on ministry that influenced the decision to move ahead with the facility upgrade. The old elevator, small and temperamental, represented a barrier within a church that prides itself on being open and accessible to all.

“We’re independent thinkers,” says John Gardner, senior minister since 1998.

“The notion of nonconformity is part of our history.” Hospitality, as defined by Plymouth’s staff

and membership, is a comprehensive term. “It also means removing physical barriers so people with limited mobility can participate fully in the life of the church,” he says.

Because Plymouth Church is a sprawling building that stretches over three levels, accessibility has been an ongoing challenge for some members and visitors. In keeping with its welcoming policy, the church provides meeting space for civic music and theater groups; it is a charter member of the Interfaith Hospitality Network that shelters families in crisis; and it hosts the weekly Study Connection, a tutoring program that matches adults with elementary school students. When the city’s Quaker congregation was in need of worship space many years ago, Gardner invited members to gather upstairs in Room 201 for a few weeks until they found a permanent home.

The need for a new elevator to accommodate all these activities was obvious for some time, but it became a priority when it became personal. RaeAnna, born with disabilities so severe that doctors estimated her longevity in months rather than years, was adopted by a couple who attended Plymouth Church. Because of her parents’ loving care, RaeAnna lived to age five and regularly attended Sunday services. “She loved the music and clapping that often are part of worship,” recalls Gardner. “Her parents moved her about in a three-wheeled stroller, and in her own way she illustrated the need for the elevator.”

The construction project, once approved, was both expensive and time consuming. A \$12,450 resource grant from the Center for Congregations helped cover preliminary work, and a generous gift from a parishioner gave the fundraising effort a major boost. The elevator was dedicated on December 22, just six days before the church’s 39th annual Boar’s Head and Yule Log Festival, an event that draws more than 2,000 persons to the sanctuary over three days.

“It was critical for us to have the elevator operational by then,” says Gardner. The traditional celebration involves 250 singers, musicians and



bell ringers who make multiple trips from the sanctuary to the third level where props, costumes and instruments are stored. With the addition of the elevator, age and physical limitations no longer prevented members' participation. "The elevator is inconspicuous and unobtrusive to the eye," notes Gardner, "but it's a vital component that ensures ministry in Plymouth Church is accessible to everyone."

### TESTED BY FIRE

The call came at 1:10 a.m. on Sunday, December 23, 2012. A motorist driving past Westview Christian Church on the northwest side of Indianapolis reported flames coming from the sanctuary. Although firefighters responded quickly and had the blaze under control within minutes, damage to the interior was extensive. The worship area was in charred ruins; soot coated the downstairs walls, and the entire building reeked of smoke. To clean the facility and reconstruct the narthex and sanctuary to their pre-fire state would cost an estimated \$350,000.

"It could have been so much worse," acknowledges Karen Johnson, vice president of the congregation and chair of the Restoration Committee. A nearby bridge, recently repaired, had reopened only a month or two before the fire. "If that bridge had still been closed, there would have been no through traffic, and the motorist would not have seen the fire."

The greater Indianapolis faith community rallied immediately around the Westview congregation. Within hours members of Speedway Baptist Church had cleared a space in their daycare area, set up chairs and arranged a table so Westview worshippers could conduct their Sunday service and observe weekly communion. The arrangement worked so well that the two congregations have continued to share space as Westview members have tackled several difficult questions. Among them: What is the next step in restoring our church? Should we return it to its previous design or should we initiate some changes? "There was never any doubt that we would rebuild," recalls Johnson. But how? "For some members, the response was, 'let's just get back in

our building.' Other members said, 'let's take a step back, talk about our sanctuary and narthex and think about what we've liked and haven't liked about them.'" Consensus emerged during several small group meetings that church leaders hosted. "As Disciples of Christ, we believe that all persons are welcome," says Johnson. "So it seemed ironic that not everyone could serve at the communion table or participate in the choir because those areas of our sanctuary weren't handicap accessible."

Finances were a concern, of course. If members decided to restore the building to its original configuration, the congregation's insurance policy would cover the work. If they decided to hire an architect to create a plan that would incorporate ramps, remove walls and make other structural changes, the congregation would be responsible for the additional costs. Hospitality won out in the end, and the Restoration Committee applied to the Center for Congregations for funds to support a new configuration. The \$15,000 resource grant that the church received came close to underwriting preliminary plans that would ensure accessibility.

"The vision of our church is to be here for all people," says Johnson. "The new design puts those words into action. We've talked a lot about how the fire has pulled us together. This is a building; the people who meet on Sunday morning are the church. We've come to realize that after going through an experience like this together."



Westview Christian Church, Indianapolis



# CENTER FOCUS 2013 ANNUAL REPORT STATISTICS

RESOURCE CONSULTING

## CENTRAL

- 4004 Conversations in
- 641 Cases of which
- 350 are New Cases with
- 533 People representing
- 335 Congregations
- 65% were clergy
- 35% were laity

### THE TOP ISSUES

Youth Ministry  
Technology  
Congregational Vitality  
Building  
Congregational Finance

## NORTHEAST

- 1159 Conversations in
- 118 Cases of which
- 69 are New Cases with
- 123 People representing
- 83 Congregations
- 72% were clergy
- 28% were laity

### THE TOP ISSUES

Youth Ministry  
Technology  
Building  
Strategic Planning  
Children's Ministries

## NORTHWEST

- 1321 Conversations in
- 187 Cases of which
- 136 are New Cases with
- 156 People representing
- 96 Congregations
- 76% were clergy
- 24% were laity

### THE TOP ISSUES

Congregational Vitality  
Community Ministry  
Building  
Children's Ministry  
Youth Ministry

## SOUTHEAST

- 1147 Conversations in
- 88 Cases of which
- 65 are New Cases with
- 120 People representing
- 61 Congregations
- 64% were clergy
- 36% were laity

### THE TOP ISSUES

Disabilities  
Technology  
Board Development  
Strategic Planning  
Children's Ministries

## SOUTHWEST

- 1153 Conversations in
- 116 Cases of which
- 82 are New Cases with
- 118 People representing
- 68 Congregations
- 67% were clergy
- 33% were laity

### THE TOP ISSUES

Care Ministries  
Technology  
Legal  
Congregational Finance  
Youth Ministry

EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

- 152 Educational Events and Meetings
- Including 36 held in Central Indiana
- 31 in the Northeast area
- 29 in the Northwest
- 27 in the Southeast
- and 29 in the Southwest
- 1884 People representing
- 744 Congregations from
- 91 Faith Groups or Denominations

### EVENTS AND MEETINGS INCLUDE:

Baptist Leadership Meeting  
Base Religious Council  
Bethel Church Communication Meeting  
Broadway Christian Administrative Group  
Brownstown Christian Church Retreat  
Christ Church Apostolic  
Christian Fellowship Church  
Circle of Care  
City Church  
Clergy Economics  
Community Dinner Meeting  
Congregational Leadership  
Congregations and Abundant Communities

Covenant United Methodist Staff Meeting  
Creating an Unbroken Circle of Care  
Crown Point Ministerial Prayer Meeting  
Diocese of Fort Wayne/South Bend  
Discovering the Other; Asset Based Approach  
Economic Challenges Facing Indiana Pastors  
Episcopal Vestry Retreat  
Essentials of Church Finance  
Faith Lutheran Church Futures Meeting  
Flourishing Call Out Luncheon  
Flourishing Congregations in Muncie  
Fountain County Introduction to the Center  
Four Doorways to Deepening Worship  
Fulfilled Leadership  
Hillside Community Church  
Historic Preservation 101  
Indiana Board of Rabbis  
Indiana Center for Middle East Peace Clergy  
Intergenerational Christian Formation  
InTrust  
Lilly Endowment Meeting  
Living Hope Church Meeting  
Making Room  
Merrillville Ministerial Meeting  
Messiah Lutheran & Light of the Cross Outreach

Ministry for the 21st Century Child  
North United Methodist Planning Session  
Positive Change for Congregations  
Reaching Millennials  
Resource Grant Information Luncheon  
Resourcing Congregations  
Service and Faith Formation  
Spiritual Care at the End of Life for African  
American Patients & their Families  
St. Anthony Associate Retreat  
St. Joseph United Methodist Meeting  
St. Mary Catholic Church  
St. Paul's United Church of Christ  
Stepping Up to Supervision  
Sticky Faith  
The Fellowship of Jackson County Clergy  
The Learning Congregation  
The Recession and Its Implications for Congregations  
The Virtue of Dialogue  
TMGI  
Toolkit for Developing, Implementing, and  
Evaluating Congregational Plans  
Trinity Lutheran Ministry Meeting  
Using Energy Prudently  
Youth Ministry Grant Initiative

GRANTS

- \$1,056,258 for
- 83 Grants of which
- 17 were Technology and Ministry Grants totaling \$492,187
- 66 were Resource Grants totaling \$564,071

### GRANT RECIPIENTS

Acton United Methodist Church  
Aldersgate United Methodist Church, Evansville  
Avon Christian Church (DOC)  
Batesville Christian Church  
Bedford Davis Memorial Church of the Nazarene  
Bethel AME Church, Bloomington  
Bloomfield United Methodist Church  
Brownsburg Calvary United Methodist Church  
Brownstown Presbyterian Church  
Central Presbyterian Church, Terre Haute  
Clayton Presbyterian Church  
Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen  
Community Christian Church, Frankfort  
Community Congregational Church, Franklin  
Crossbridge Community Church, Fort Wayne  
Danville United Methodist Church  
Dearborn Hills United Methodist Church, Lawrenceburg  
Eastminster Presbyterian Church, Evansville  
Epworth United Methodist Church, Indianapolis  
Fairlawn Presbyterian Church, Columbus  
Fairmeadow Community Church, Munster  
Faith Lutheran Church, Demotte  
First Assembly of God, Covington  
First Baptist Church, Madison

First Baptist Church, Seymour  
First Christian Church, Francesville  
First Christian Church (DOC), Lafayette  
First Christian Church of Rochester  
First Church of the Nazarene, Seymour  
First Missionary Church of Berne  
First Presbyterian Church, Columbus  
First Presbyterian Church, Goshen  
First Presbyterian Church, South Bend  
First Wayne Street United Methodist, Fort Wayne  
Fortville Christian Church  
Geist Christian Church, Indianapolis  
Grace Lutheran Church, Syracuse  
Grace Lutheran Church, Dyer  
Grace Point Church of the Nazarene, Fort Wayne  
Greater Spirit of Love Church Of God In Christ, Fort Wayne  
Holy Ghost Temple Church of God in Christ, Muncie  
Holy Name Catholic Church, Cedar Lake  
Holy Rosary Catholic Church, Evansville  
Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, St. John  
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Carmel  
Iglesia Nueva Esperanza, Hammond  
Imagine Church, Westfield  
Indy Metro Church, Indianapolis  
Joy of All Who Sorrow Eastern Orthodox Church, Indianapolis  
Love Church, Fort Wayne  
Markle United Methodist Church  
Marquette Park United Methodist Church, Gary  
McCoy Memorial Baptist Church, Elkhart  
Milan United Methodist Church  
Mt. Gilead Church, Mooresville

New Unity Missionary Baptist Church, Indianapolis  
North Madison Christian Church, Madison  
Northview Church, Carmel  
Ogilville Christian Church, Columbus  
Old Bethel United Methodist Church, Indianapolis  
Park Chapel Christian Church, Greenfield  
Plainfield United Methodist Church  
Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, Fort Wayne  
Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis  
Resurrection Lutheran Church, Indianapolis  
Salem Presbyterian Church  
Selma United Methodist Church  
Sherwood Oaks Christian Church, Bloomington  
St. Anthony Catholic Church, Evansville  
St. Charles Borromeo Church, Peru  
St. James Lutheran Church, Greenfield  
St. John's Episcopal Church, Crawfordsville  
St. John's United Church, Chesterton  
St. Malachy Catholic Church, Brownsburg  
St. Mary Catholic Church, North Vernon  
St. Peter's Highland United Church of Christ, Evansville  
St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Corydon  
Stones Crossing Church, Greenwood  
The Bridge Community Church, Decatur  
The Journey Church, Westfield  
The Journey Church, Plainfield  
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Crown Point  
Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Danville  
Wabash Friends Church  
Wabash Presbyterian Church  
Westview Christian Church, Indianapolis

## Financial Report

# STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION AND ACTIVITIES

The following is a summary of the statement of financial position and the statement of activities of the Center as of December 31, 2013 and for the year then ended. This financial information was extracted from the audited financial statements of the Indianapolis Center for Congregations, Inc. It does not, however, include all disclosures normally associated with financial statements prepared in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. The complete financial statements, including footnotes and the report of our auditors, BKD, LLP, are available for review upon request.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION	ASSETS	2013	2012
	Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,625,884	\$ 2,501,348
	Prepaid expenses and other assets	21,933	25,431
	Investments	31,973,612	33,048,992
	Property and equipment	140,374	211,179
	Total assets	33,761,803	35,786,950
	LIABILITIES		
	Accounts payable	\$ 76,015	\$ 191,829
	Accrued expenses	52,240	87,317
	Total liabilities	128,255	279,146
NET ASSETS			
Unrestricted	\$ 3,157,105	\$ 2,616,649	
Temporarily restricted	30,476,443	32,891,155	
Total net assets	33,633,548	35,507,804	
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 33,761,803	\$ 35,786,950	

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES		2013			2012		
		Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
	<b>Revenues and other support</b>						
	Contributions	\$ —	\$ 2,135,000	\$ 2,135,000	\$ —	\$ 14,000,000	\$ 14,000,000
	Return of grant funds	—	70,252	70,252	—	56,621	38,758
	Educational Events	42,895	—	42,895	38,758	—	58,071
	Investment income	346,735	—	346,735	144,683	—	144,683
		389,630	2,205,252	2,594,882	183,441	14,056,621	14,240,062
	Net assets released from restrictions	4,619,964	(4,619,964)	—	4,400,327	(4,400,327)	—
	Total revenues and other support	5,009,594	(2,414,712)	2,594,882	4,583,768	9,656,294	14,240,062
<b>Expenses and losses</b>							
Resource Consulting	677,531	—	677,531	428,710	—	428,710	
Resource Discovery and Dissemination	195,764	—	195,764	263,746	—	263,746	
Education	800,385	—	800,385	713,375	—	713,375	
Resource Grants	831,851	—	831,851	1,036,008	—	1,036,008	
Major Grant Initiative	745,335	—	745,335	583,262	—	583,262	
Congregational Learning and Evaluation	634,844	—	634,844	591,942	—	591,942	
Total program services	3,885,710	—	3,885,710	3,617,043	—	3,617,043	
Management and general	777,149	—	777,149	822,042	—	822,042	
Total expenses	4,662,859	—	4,662,859	4,439,085	—	4,439,085	
Change in net assets before other gains/losses	346,735	(2,414,712)	(2,067,977)	144,683	9,656,294	9,800,977	
Realized gains (losses) on investments	(123,968)	—	(123,968)	—	—	—	
Unrealized gains (losses) on investments	317,689	—	317,689	(15,196)	—	(15,196)	
Change in net assets	540,456	(2,414,712)	(1,874,256)	129,487	9,656,294	9,785,781	
Net assets, beginning of year	2,616,649	32,891,155	35,507,804	2,487,162	23,234,861	25,722,023	
Net assets, end of year	\$3,157,105	\$ 30,476,443	\$ 33,633,548	\$ 2,616,649	\$ 32,891,155	\$ 35,507,804	





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### **MISSION**

The mission of the Indianapolis Center for Congregations is to strengthen Indiana congregations by helping them find and use the best resources available to address the challenges and opportunities they identify – and then to share what we learn nationwide.

The Indianapolis Center for Congregations is funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. and is a supporting organization of the Alban Institute. Alban is a research, publishing, education and consulting organization based in Herndon, Virginia. Founded in 1974, Alban is an independent center of learning and leadership development with a focus on congregations.

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Front cover photo is from Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Carmel



Plymouth Congregational Church in Fort Wayne wanted to remove “physical barriers so people with limited mobility can participate fully in the life of the church.”



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— Westview Christian Church, Indianapolis