



**Search for the Executive Director  
Louisville Institute  
Louisville, Kentucky**

**THE SEARCH**

The Louisville Institute (LI) invites applications and nominations for the position of Executive Director (ED). This is an exceptional opportunity for an innovative and collaborative leader to advance LI's critical work at the intersection of the church and academy. LI celebrates its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2025 and is poised for expanded capacity and impact as a result of generous funding from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. (LEI) in its 2025 continuing grant award. This substantial investment from LEI, along with an ongoing organizational restructuring effort guided by the governing leadership of LI, positions the next ED to build on LI's significant history and lead the organization into its next chapter. This is a distinctive opportunity to serve as an impactful catalyst who will engage the breadth and depth of North American Christianity in its rich diversities, build and enhance bridges of mutual learning and development between church and academy, and serve as a convener who inspires with hope and possibility amid a rapidly changing and complex landscape.

Through collaborative partnerships and an expanding network, the Executive Director convenes a diverse array of researchers, congregational ministry leaders, and scholars to confer on the needs and changing nature of the church, and the academy that serves it; helps to identify and support promising religious scholarship that serves the purpose of the church; and builds ongoing relationships between the Institute and seminaries, colleges, universities, churches, and other faith-based agencies with whom LI intersects. The Executive Director seeks to focus on the potential of religious research to advance the vitality of faith communities, theological studies, religious studies, and theological education in North America.

Reporting to the President of the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (LPTS), the ED is the chief executive of the institute, leading a team of 6, and will oversee the current 3-year continuation grant cycle with a budget of \$18M. Working collaboratively with Lilly Endowment, LPTS, the LI Advisory Board, key stakeholders, and the LI staff, the next ED will create a compelling vision and strategy for the future of LI. In particular, the ED will champion diversity, equity, and inclusion within the organization and across the field, lead a healthy organizational culture through the development of a collaborative, high-functioning team, and advance the thought leadership and innovative field-building work of the institute across North America.

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## ABOUT THE LOUISVILLE INSTITUTE

In late 1990, [Lilly Endowment Inc.](#) (LEI), an Indianapolis-based private philanthropic foundation, launched the Louisville Institute (LI), based at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Created in 1937 by three members of the Lilly family through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company, the Endowment is committed to deepening and enriching the religious lives of Christians in the United States, principally by supporting efforts that enhance the vitality of congregations. LEI values the broad diversity of Christian traditions and congregations today and endeavors to support them in a wide variety of contexts. They seek to ensure that all types of congregations have a steady stream of wise, faithful, diverse and well-prepared leaders. LEI works to strengthen theological schools as well as religious institutions and networks that nurture pastors and support the ministries of congregations. They support efforts that help Christians draw on the wisdom of their theological traditions as they strive to understand and respond to contemporary challenges and live their faith more fully. LEI is especially interested in efforts that nurture the religious lives of children, youth and young adults and share the beauty and vibrancy of Christian faith with a new generation. LEI also works to foster public understanding about religion. While they seek to lift up the contributions that people of all religious faiths make to our greater civic well-being, we also encourage fair and accurate portrayals of both the negative and positive effects of religion on the world.

As a program fully funded by Lilly Endowment, the Louisville Institute builds upon the Endowment's long-standing support of both leadership education and scholarly research on North American religion, Catholic, Protestant, evangelical, and Orthodox communities, historic African American churches, Hispanic and Latinx religious experience, and other diverse expressions of Christian faith in the United States and Canada. The Louisville Institute focuses on grantmaking, convening, and fellowships in theological education that strengthen and bridge church and academy. Through their convening work, LI seeks to gather pastors and academics in ways that support and foster the future of the North American church.

The Louisville Institute recently went through a process of restructuring, which was the result of an in-depth evaluation of mission alignment. This restructuring has positioned the Louisville Institute to better carry out its core mission and ensure that LI is administratively aligned and supported by Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (LPTS). Under the new structure, the ED will have the opportunity to build out the team and make strategic hires. The ED will have direct oversight for a senior director of programming, research, and strategic initiatives and three grant program managers, with shared reporting lines between LI and LPTS for an event and media coordinator and a hybrid administrative coordinator. The ED also works closely with the [LI Advisory Board](#) who help guide, shape, and inform the work of LI.

The Louisville Institute is funded by the Lilly Endowment via continuation grants that are historically 3 years in scope. The ED works collaboratively with the LI staff, LI advisory board, and LPTS to develop the continuation grant proposals, which effectively serve as a strategic and programmatic plan for the Institute. The current continuation grant was awarded by LI for the term January 2025-December 2027 with a total budget of \$18M.

### ***Grant Programs***

Louisville Institute grant programs support religious and theological studies conducted within the church and academic institutions. In general, LI grants support those who help lead religious institutions and communities and those who study and care about them. The Louisville Institute identifies pastoral leaders and academics who are passionately committed to the vitality of North American Christianity, sometimes described as “scholarly pastors” and “faithful academics.” “Scholarly pastors” are church leaders committed to ministry yet realistic about its distinctive challenges in contemporary culture. They value theological education and appreciate history and tradition while welcoming new ideas and creative possibilities; they reflect deeply on what faithfulness means in their contexts. “Faithful academics” see themselves as both students of religion and persons of faith who want their scholarly work to serve North American religious life and practice.

LI believes that those who study religious institutions need to be in conversation with those who lead them and vice versa. Pastoral leaders and academics have distinct vantage points on the challenges and promises of faith, practice, and ministry. Each can develop and share their wisdom, creating networks that strengthen communities of faith in North America.

The Louisville Institute supports research pertaining to contemporary North American Christianity. Sometimes this may be practical theological research on spiritual formation in Christian faith communities or study by an ethicist on religion, work, and family. Or it may be sociological or historical research into trends that speak to today’s realities. In all cases, LI supports studies that contribute to the vitality of Christian churches and related religious institutions.

**Pastoral Study Project:** The Louisville Institute Pastoral Study Project Grant (PSP) awards grants of up to US\$20,000 to support individual or collaborative study projects on Christian life, religious practices and institutions, and possibilities and ideas for the church, our communities, and the wider world. Grants are awarded to skilled and innovative clergy, lay leaders, and staff working in diverse Christian contexts in the United States and Canada.

**Grants for Researchers:** The Louisville Institute Grant for Researchers (GFR) is a new grant for the 2025 season that provides grants of up to US\$55,000 to support scholarly research in Christian faith and life, the practice of ministry, religious trends and movements, Christian and other faith-based institutions, and religion and social issues. This program is open to scholars and researchers in the United States and Canada.

**First Book Grant for Scholars of Color:** The First Book Grant for Scholars of Color (FBG) provides grants up to US\$55,000 to assist early career, pre-tenured religion scholars of color to complete a major research project about Christian faith and life, the practice of ministry, religious trends and movements, Christian and other faith-based institutions, and religion and social issues. Of particular interest to the Louisville Institute are projects that bridge academic scholarship and the life of the church in North America.

### ***Fellowships***

Three fellowship programs support doctoral and or post-doctoral scholars considering vocations in theological education, and whose research has the potential to bridge church and academy and enrich the life of the church in North America. Eligible applicants are committed to the Christian church and to theological education and can reflect on how their doctoral studies are preparing them for careers in theological education. Applicants come from a variety of academic disciplines, including history, ethics,

the social sciences, biblical studies, and historical, systematic, and practical theology, as well as interdisciplinary pursuits.

These three fellowship programs support the formation of engaged and thoughtful academics whose work serves the church and its ministries. Through such programs, the Louisville Institute contributes to the vocational trajectories of a new generation of theological educators prepared to respond faithfully to the needs of communities of faith. Because the Louisville Institute is housed at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, LI fellowships cannot be awarded to members of the LPTS Board, faculty, administration, staff, or student body, or to any of their immediate family members (parents, spouse, or children). Additionally, Louisville Institute Advisory Board members and members of their immediate families are ineligible to receive Louisville Institute funding.

**Postdoctoral Fellowship:** The Postdoctoral Fellowship provides early career theological educators with vocational and professional formation through a two-year placement as a visiting scholar at a graduate theological school, college, university, or education and research organization in the United States and Canada. As part of the Louisville Institute's Vocation of the Theological Educator (VTE) Initiative, these fellows engage in intentional, focused, professional formation and teaching as they explore a calling to be a theological educator for future pastoral leaders.

**Dissertation Fellowship:** The Dissertation Fellowship offers US\$35,000 grants to support the final year of dissertation writing for Ph.D. or Th.D. students whose research focuses on Christian faith and life, the practice of ministry, religious trends and movements, Christian and other faith-based institutions, and religion and social issues in the United States and Canada.

**Doctoral Fellowship:** The two-year Louisville Institute Doctoral Fellowship invites Ph.D. and Th.D. students currently in their first or second year of a doctoral program to consider theological education as a vocation. Doctoral Fellows receive US\$3,000 each year for two years and join with a peer cohort of other fellows for three formational gatherings each year as part of the Vocation of the Theological Educator Initiative.

## ABOUT LOUISVILLE PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

**Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (LPTS),** one of ten seminaries in the Presbyterian Church (USA), is distinguished by its nationally recognized field education and marriage and family therapy programs, the scholarship and church service among its faculty, and a commitment to training individuals to participate in the continuing ministry of Jesus Christ. LPTS has four degree programs: Master of Divinity, Master of Arts in Religion, and Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy and dual degree programs in Business Administration, Social Work, and Marriage and Family Therapy; and Master of Arts with Marriage and Family Therapy. The student body is comprised of about 150 students with more than 20 denominations represented, more than 25% underrepresented racial/ethnic students, and about 60% female and 40% male students. There are 17 faculty members, with 48% female faculty, and 62% of faculty are members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) with United Methodist, Disciples of Christ, American Baptist, Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ, and Lutheran (ELCA) faith traditions also represented.

### **Leadership**

[The Rev. Dr. Andrew Pomerville](#) has served as President of LPTS since June of 2023. His background includes experience in both higher education and ecumenical parish ministry, defined by innovation, energy and joyful communication as an executive administrator, chaplain, and senior pastor. Prior to his arrival at LPTS he served as the founding director of the Center for College and Community Engagement, Assistant Vice President for Community Engagement, and Senior Chaplain at Alma College. Andrew came to Alma in 1998 from his role as Senior Pastor for the multi-denominational 1300-member People's Church of East Lansing — affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ, and the American Baptist Church. Ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA), Andrew is a graduate of three Presbyterian schools: BA in history and religious studies, Alma College; M.Div., Princeton Theological Seminary, and the DMin from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, focused on Reformed theology in a joint program with University of Aberdeen.

## **ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE LOUISVILLE INSTITUTE**

The Executive Director is LI's Chief Executive Officer, reports to the LPTS President, and serves as a member of the LPTS senior administrative team. The ED is responsible for working creatively and collaboratively with a variety of constituents and stakeholders, including the LI Advisory Board, LPTS, and its Board of Trustees, the Religion Division of Lilly Endowment Inc. ("LEI"), fellow LEI-funded organizations, pastors and other ministry practitioners, scholar educators, religious researchers, and persons preparing for the vocation of theological education. The ED is responsible for managing the programs and operations of the organization, driving the strategic direction of LI, strengthening the reputation of LI, and communicating the mission of LI to remain at the vanguard of innovation and emerging research and ministry that serves the church. The ED directs and coordinates LI staff and operations, hires personnel, and manages staff to ensure excellence in serving the mission, and fosters a collegial and accountable work culture.

Through collaborative partnerships and an expanding network, the Executive Director convenes a diverse array of researchers, pastoral and other ministry leaders, and scholars to confer on the needs and changing nature of the church and the academy that serves it; helps to identify and support promising religious scholarship that serves the purpose of the church; and builds ongoing relationships between the Institute and seminaries, colleges, universities, churches, and other faith-based agencies with whom LI intersects. The Executive Director seeks to focus on the potential of religious research to advance the vitality of faith communities, theological studies, religious studies, and theological education in North America.

As LI looks to the future, the next Executive Director will be expected to embrace the following:

## **KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

### **Serve as a Consummate Bridge Builder and Ambassador**

The next ED will need to be a consummate bridge builder, both internally and externally, someone who has expertise in cultivating relationships and fostering cross-cultural collaboration across sub-communities, particularly across the theological academy and communities of religious practice. The ED must be particularly attentive to LI's relationship with the Lilly Endowment and the Lilly ecology of institutions and programs, the seminary, and other key partners, including past, present, and prospective LI grantees and program participants. In addition, the ED must be an effective and compelling ambassador

for LI with the credibility, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal skills necessary to engender trust and confidence in both the leader and the institute.

### **Foster a Healthy Organizational Culture Supported by a Collaborative, High-Functioning Team**

With the benefit of recent organizational restructuring, strengthened governance, and more robust administrative integration between LI and LPTS, the next ED will have the opportunity to build a high-functioning team and cultivate a healthy and dynamic organizational culture. The ED will work collaboratively with the president of LPTS and the LI advisory board to ensure that LI is structured, staffed, and resourced to execute its grantmaking, convening, research, and reporting activities and positioned for ongoing strategic planning, ideation, and innovation.

### **Advance the Thought Leadership and Innovative Field-Building Work of the Institute**

As Louisville Institute celebrates its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2025, the next ED will have a unique opportunity to shape reflections on and celebrations of LI's past work and communicate LI's current and future direction. In addition to maintaining current grants and fellowship programs, the ED will be a thought leader who can identify emerging trends in both scholarship and practice, make data-informed decisions, and find innovative ways to share impact and develop a more robust "learning loop" fueled by LI's grants, fellowships, convenings, and networks. The ED will be a strong partner to the seminary, have an appreciation for theological education, and seek out opportunities for how the work of LI and LPTS can support and amplify each other in mutually beneficial ways.

### **Champion an active and dynamic commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of the work of Louisville Institute**

The next ED must be fundamentally committed to fostering and advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of the Institute's work, including the Institute's internal operations, staffing, and organizational culture; the design and administration of grants, fellowships, and convenings; and in the thought leadership of both the ED and the Institute. The ED will bring commitment and rigor to LI's efforts to engage the breadth and depth of North American Christianity with particular attention to theological, ecclesial, linguistic, ethnic, regional, and socio-cultural diversities. This commitment includes identifying and supporting grantees, fellows, and participants who bring differing experiences, perspectives, and expressions of Christian faith to the LI community.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

Louisville Institute seeks an energetic, thoughtful, and visionary leader and an effective, collaborative administrator to serve as its next Executive Director.

The successful candidate will bring many of the following experiences, characteristics, and abilities:

- Strong record of achievement in executive leadership, including administration, budgeting, staff management, and operational oversight.
- A research or professional doctorate in a field relevant to the work of LI is strongly preferred;

- Proven experience as a pastoral or other ministry leader, theological educator, and/or senior executive in higher theological education or church-related ministry. A combination of leadership experience in congregational/pastoral ministry and higher education and administration a plus;
- Background cultivating cross-cultural, multicultural, and intercultural partnerships and teams, including leveraging established networks that will aid the LI in its continued efforts to connect with underrepresented persons and communities across the church and academy in North America; a bilingual or multilingual background is a plus.
- Experience with grant program management and administration;
- Deep theological commitment to the Christian faith; well-informed on religious and social issues, and trends and challenges in bridging the church and the academy; enthusiasm for the life and future of the Christian church;
- Expertise in building and stewarding diverse project-based and research partnerships, and for sustaining relationships that model collegiality and enhance interdisciplinary connection across multiple academic and religious contexts;
- Knowledge of and a passion for theological education;
- Ability to articulate the scholarly and pastoral importance of theological education, its professional culture, and the ways scholars and pastoral leaders serve and strengthen the church;
- Demonstrated commitment to and track record of embedding and advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion into all professional efforts and the broader LI ecosystem.
- Entrepreneurial curiosity and insight about the future of theological education and the church, and the potential that convening diverse perspectives for study and collaboration can offer;
- Excellent communication and organizational skills, proven management skills to direct and coordinate staff, exemplary critical and strategic thinking skills, understanding and upholding governance guidelines, and the ability to manage multiple tasks ranging from detailed focus to high-level strategy;
- Experience supporting and leading a high-performing team and building a culture of trust through availability, adaptability, approachability, and accountability.

## Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/louisville-institute/executive-director>

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