

IN THE AFTERMATH: RENEWING THE SOUL OF A LEADER

2021 MRC PALMER GRANT

***The Message* puts it like this: "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." (Matthew 11:28-30).**

The experience of the global pandemic of 2020 and 2021 has left many of us weary. Chaplains and clergy in positions of care have been at the side of deathbeds at unprecedented rates; they have often had to be stand-ins for family members as people in nursing homes and hospice care have had to be isolated. They have had to set aside their own grief and worries to be able to tend to the grief permeating the air around them. Many pastors and church leaders worked long hours learning technology and developing online worship beyond the time it normally takes to prepare sermons and worship services. Many churches grieved members who passed away or developed chronic illness as "long-haulers" with COVID-19. Churches felt financial stress as their members struggled with unemployment. Church leaders have struggled to bring comfort and strength to their congregations while also attending to their families and communities. Often, clergy and ministerial leadership have put themselves last. A number of them did not take vacations during the pandemic, feeling the need to be present to keep the people in their care connected to one another and to the outside world. All of this can lead church leaders to shout "yes" in answer to *The Message's* questions at the beginning of Matthew 11:28; "Yes, we're tired. Yes, we're worn out. Yes, we're burned out!"

This MRC Palmer Grant cycle focuses on helping recipients to learn the unforced rhythms of grace promised in that same Matthew passage. The grant provides the opportunity and encouragement for church leadership to attend to the health of their souls, their bodies, their hearts, and their minds. Grant projects should be inspired by Howard Thurman's words, "God, teach us how to respond to the needs of Thy children in ways that do not undermine the self, but inspire and enliven the spirit." (Thurman, *The Centering Moment*.)

We invite grant applications focused on creating opportunities for participants to deepen their understanding of God's call to "get away with me and...recover your life." Deepening our relationship with God, deepening our relationships with family and friends, deepening our relationships among our collegial community and our congregations, and deepening our relationship with ourselves and understanding of our own needs leads to becoming healthy, vibrant followers of God. May we all be blessed by the learnings of this grant cycle.

Grant Range: Minimum \$5,000; Maximum \$25,000; If applying in partnership with an ABC Region or organization, the maximum is \$40,000.



Deadline: July 31, 2021

Apply: www.abcofgiving.org Click on "For Ministries" and select Palmer Grants from the drop-down menu. (No partial grants will be awarded.)

We are seeking projects that will...

- Encourage cohorts of ministers from multiple ministry settings to address physical, mental, emotional, spiritual well-being
- Develop awareness of ministerial burn-out in ministry settings (churches, chaplaincies, etc.) and exploring practices that would address those risk factors
- Equip lay leaders and pastoral relations committees/personnel committees to be supportive of clergy wellness
- Assist ministerial leaders in identifying assets for leadership and how these strengths build resiliency in ministry
- Provide opportunities to reflect on their experience of the pandemic and explore what God has awakened in their faith and in their leadership