Mission
The Lake Institute on Faith & Giving exists to serve the public good by exploring the multiple connections between philanthropy and faith within the major religious traditions.

Resources for Tough Times
Seminar: Creating Congregational Cultures of Generosity
In this two-day seminar you will learn:

1. how to talk about money with theological integrity,
2. how to create an organizational climate of fiscal transparency and accountability,
3. how to extend the practice of pastoral care to care for donors, and
4. how to become a generous share-the-vision type of organization.

For information contact lfi@iupui.edu

Course: Faith & Fundraising

United States Charitable Giving in 2008
In July 2009, the Giving USA Foundation released its 54th annual report analyzing who gives what to whom in America. The report breaks down charitable giving into nine subsectors, including Religion, Public-Society Benefit, Human Services, Education, and Health among others. Defining "giving to religion" as, generally, "donations to houses of worship, to the governing bodies of faith groups, and to ministries, which include broadcast and print initiatives," the study illustrates the current composition and size of the sector and provides a useful tool in analyzing trends in giving. Giving USA 2009 is researched and written by the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University for the Giving USA Foundation. The full volume, including the chapter, "Giving to Religion," is available at www.givingusa.org.

Giving USA 2009: Highlights
While estimated charitable giving exceeded $300 billion in 2008 for the second time in history, last year overall charitable giving decreased by 2% (5.7% when adjusted for inflation) - the largest decrease in half a century.

However, the Giving USA study found that giving to religion actually increased by 5.5% (1.6% when adjusted for inflation). Statistics represent current estimates.
This four-day course is a joint offering of the Lake Institute on Faith & Giving and The Fund Raising School of the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University. The next offering of this program will be May 10-13, 2010.

For information, click here.

Lake Institute Highlights

An audience member poses a question to a panel of congregational leaders at our Religious Giving in Uncertain Times Conference on May 4, 2009.

Religious Giving in Uncertain Times Conference

The conference was held at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Indiana, on Monday, May 4. To read a summary of the key findings of the conference, visit our website.

Special Event

The Geography of the Sacred: How we sanctify space

November 12, 2009

Congregation Beth-El Zedeck

Indianapolis, Indiana

- Giving as a percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is as strong as it has historically been - 2.2% of GDP.
- In 2008, giving to religion enjoyed the highest percent increase of all the subsectors of charitable giving.
- Religious congregations and organizations received an estimated $106.89 billion or 35% of the total. Compare that to 2007, when religion received $102.32 billion or 33.4% of all charitable dollars.
- Human Services, which includes organizations such as Lutheran Social Services and Catholic Charities, was one of the subsectors most seriously affected by the economic downturn, experiencing an estimated decline of 12.7% in charitable giving (-15.9% in inflation-adjusted dollars).
- Theological schools and seminaries are suffering as well, as giving to Education declined by 5.5% (-9% adjusted for inflation). Religious health institutions are also not immune - giving to Health declined by 6.5% (-10% adjusted for inflation).

Making Sense of Giving Trends and Patterns

As the history of giving during recessions shows us, the fact that giving to religion was least affected by the economy should come as no surprise. In the twelve recessions since 1967, the average decline in giving to religion when adjusted for inflation is but 0.1%. Over 50% of all household giving is to religion, and giving to their place of worship remains a priority for most
households regardless of the economic situation. We find that individual religious giving reflects what sociologist Robert Wuthnow calls the "local focus of American religion." In other words, the "local church is a private space, an extension of one's home in which familial relationships prevail" and so religious givers appear to be motivated by the same sort of care one shows one's family (See Boundless Faith, 2009).

Yet, the recession did not begin to emerge in earnest until the last quarter of 2008, suggesting that, barring a miraculous economic turnaround, giving is likely to remain depressed for 2009. Indeed, according to the most recent Philanthropic Giving Index released by the Center on Philanthropy in August 2009, fundraisers have never felt less optimistic about their current fundraising climate. In addition, some academics compare the current recession to that of 1974, which was fueled by the Arab oil embargo and gas shortages. "If comparisons hold up, giving won't recover to 2007 levels until 2012 at best," reported the Chronicle of Philanthropy in the June 8, 2009, issue.

As a result, little doubt remains that congregations and organizations dependent on endowments for their operational budgets will be economically challenged over the next few years. For example, according to John Griswold of the Commonfund Institute, a 23% loss in endowment value in 2009 would result in 8.6% fewer 2010 budget dollars available (See Trusteeship, May 2009).

Lessons Learned from 2009

The Lake Institute works with congregations across the United States on issues related to fostering the creation of congregational cultures of generosity. Through these interactions with congregations, the following four lessons have emerged for those coping with economic uncertainty.

- **Amidst a crisis, leadership** has an obligation to consider actions which would otherwise be considered politically and logistically untenable.
- A **congregation's agreement as to who it is and why it exists** will make tough financial decisions more manageable and less controversial.
- A **strategic plan** can help a congregation identify activities that are less central to its mission and therefore less eligible for continued financial support.
- **Plan for the future!** Seize this as the opportune time to reposition your congregation for a healthy and robust future. *This recession will pass.*

**Coming Soon:** The Lake Institute on Faith & Giving at the Center on Philanthropy has partnered with the Alban Institute to study the financial challenges congregations have faced in the economic downturn and their responses over the past year. Check our [website](#) for the full report on the **2009 Congregational Economic Impact Study**, coming soon.
Lake Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship

The Lake Institute is pleased to announce that **Bradley A. Koch, 2008-2009 Lake Doctoral Fellow**, has earned his Ph.D. in Sociology from **Indiana University** with the successful completion of his dissertation, *The Prosperity Gospel and Economic Prosperity: Race, Class, Giving and Voting*. For an abstract and key findings, as well as a link to the complete dissertation, visit our [website](http://www.philanthropy.iupui.edu/LakeFamilyInstitute/offerings.aspx).

This fall, **Sarah Hammond of Yale University**, begins her tenure as the **2009-2010 Lake Doctoral Fellow**. In her dissertation, she will argue that contrary to the reigning historiographical consensus, fundamentalist Protestants - especially businessmen - participated actively in American cultural and political life between the 1925 Scopes Trial and the Reagan Revolution.

Visit [http://www.philanthropy.iupui.edu/LakeFamilyInstitute/offerings.aspx](http://www.philanthropy.iupui.edu/LakeFamilyInstitute/offerings.aspx) for more information on both of our Lake Doctoral Fellows and the application for the 2010-2011 fellowship.