

ALUMNUS USES LILLY GRANT TO PURSUE JUSTICE

The Rev. Chad Collins '05 has always been passionate about justice. This summer—through Lilly's Clergy Renewal Program—Chad and his family had the chance to witness God's love in various cultures and found time for relaxing.

Pastor of Valley View Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh for the last nine years, Chad applied for and received the renewal grant which is designed to be a blessing to both the pastor and the congregation. The application asked, 'What makes your heart sing?' For Chad, that's three things: Being with people from different cultures, pursuing God's justice and peace, and spending time with family.

In June, Chad and his wife, Johanna, went to Palestine. "We saw the beauty and the difference in that culture," says Chad. They witnessed the suffering of the Palestinians and lived alongside the people as they experienced midnight raids and violence.



The next month, the whole family—including children Nesta, Micaiah, Sweet Peace, Angelo, and Sabeel—visited Los Angeles and Pasadena, Calif. In LA, Father Greg Boyle, a Jesuit priest, runs Homeboy Industries. Through various ventures, Fr. Boyle and his team minister to the people in areas with high rates of gang violence. "Once these people get into the system, both the gang and the judicial system, it's hard to get out. No one wants to give a job to someone with a record." But, Homeboy Industries does just that. "There's an opportunity for grace, forgiveness, and a new start," says Chad. "God's love is among them. There's a mutual up-building with the Body of Christ."

During the final month of the sabbatical, Chad and his family spent time at Virginia Beach. "I would encourage everyone to participate in this sabbatical program. Some pastors wait until they've served for 20 or 30 years, but this is a great opportunity for renewal."

Back in the city, Chad and Valley View work for justice. They've partnered with Open Hand Ministries, a non-profit started by alumnus Michael Stanton '06, to renovate houses in the East End for people in need. They also work with Garfield Community Farm, an urban farm run by alumnus John Creasy '06, to provide locally-growth organic vegetables through the church's food bank.

"As a Seminary student, the deeper I understood the Scriptures, the richer my roots became to care for God's people who are made in God's image," said Chad. "My professors helped me develop my call to do whatever I can do to bring the Good News to all of God's people."

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