

**By: Rev. Lee Huckleberry**

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In mid-December, I will travel to Indianapolis to attend what will surely be one of the most memorable evenings of my life. As a Flourish! grant recipient, I will join dozens of my clergy colleagues from across the state to celebrate the completion of a remarkable journey and receive a financial gift that will utterly change my life.

When I was informed several years ago that I was to receive a \$15,000 ministerial relief grant, I was in disbelief. I had become so resigned to a life of financial indebtedness that I could not imagine a different path. The Flourish! program became that path for me – a *sacred* path. I use the word *sacred* because God has been ever-present along the way as I have shared my story with fellow pilgrims, confronted my fears, confessed my sins, gained new insights, and imagined a new way of being in relation to money.

At a recent gathering of grant recipients and congregational leaders, I was asked to share a few remarks about my Flourish! experience. The first words that came to my lips were, “Thank you!” This program has exemplified the church at its very best: creative, collaborative, hospitable, generous, joyful, engaging, prayerful, supportive, and animated with hope. Everything has been useful. Nothing has been wasted.

At several places along this path, I have shared with colleagues, parishioners, and friends my reluctance to use the words “flourish” and “finances” in the same sentence. For the first 20 years of my ministry, I could not imagine that they belonged together. But today, by the grace of God and through the faithfulness of the Indiana Christian Church, I know that they do. What an incredible gift! One that I intend to share for the rest of my days.