



Overwhelmed with

JOY!

Matthew 2:10

Imagine this ...

Imagine this. A young clergyperson graduates from seminary, tens of thousands of dollars in debt, and eagerly takes their first call. It's a small church, but they have a lot of heart. They can't pay Conference guidelines, and benefits are pretty scarce, but they love their pastor. There are a lot of casseroles. The parsonage is nice, and the church works hard to maintain it and keep good boundaries. The church never once forgets their pastor's ordination anniversary. The pastor is making ends meet, barely, if they make the minimum payment on everything. Then they discover they need a medical procedure not covered by the basic (non-Pension Boards) insurance the church provides. What will they do? Take out a loan to save their own life?

Multiply that across a career's worth of years and emergencies and student loan payments. How will that pastor ever retire? What kind of life will they have if they do? What good will a former parsonage and all those loving casseroles do then? Who will show them the love of Christ other than the good people at the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, who administer the Christmas Fund?

If any of this scenario makes you anxious, or mad, you can do something about it: give as generously as you are able to the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross offering. The Christmas Fund is our United Church of Christ's way of taking care of that pastor—and all UCC pastors and church professionals—throughout their careers and beyond.

In 2021, gifts to the Christmas Fund enabled:

- Monthly pension supplementation for 231 retired clergy and lay employees (\$1,104,479)
- Health benefits supplementation for 87 retired clergy and lay employees (\$177,600)
- Emergency grants for 53 individuals and families (\$150,338)
- Christmas "Thank You" gift checks to 509 retired clergy and lay employees (\$254,000)

The Christmas Fund

For the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund