

## Christmas Fund Gifts Provided...

The generous gifts of UCC congregations and individuals to the Christmas Fund enabled the Pension Boards' Ministerial Assistance Program to provide some form of Ministerial Assistance to approximately 1,600 persons during 2009:

- Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks will be sent to approximately 900 persons in 2009. Of those who will receive checks, 20 are over 100 years of age. The oldest person is 107. One person has received Christmas checks continuously since 1976. The 900 gifts total \$270,000.
- Emergency Grants have been provided to 44 individuals and families, totaling \$61,716 in the first eight months of 2009.
- Monthly pension supplementation is provided to 450 persons. These gifts total \$101,400 per month (\$1,216,800 per year). A significant part of the annual total of \$1,216,800 comes from the Christmas Fund.
- Quarterly health premium supplementation is provided to 294 families, totaling \$165,200 per quarter. All of the funding for health premium supplementation is derived from the Christmas Fund.

(These statistics reflect activity as of August 31, 2009.  
Please log on to the Christmas Fund web site at  
[www.christmasfund.org](http://www.christmasfund.org) for updated information.)

At age 82, the Reverend Donald F. Koehn has no plans to step down from the work he loves. In fact, he is as enthusiastic about his ministry today as he was when he was ordained in 1953 at the age of 25. Now, at an age when most of his peers are enjoying a leisurely retirement, he is serving as interim pastor of First Presbyterian Church in nearby Richfield, Wisconsin and has no desire to stop.

"I just could not retire," Don insists. "I plan to just keep going as long as the good Lord keeps me alive. I love people. I love to preach. I think that's why we are here."

Don values every day, because he knows first-hand how quickly things can change. After seminary, he spent five years serving a small rural community church before accepting a call to Calvary Memorial Church in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, a suburb of Milwaukee, where he remained for 32 years until 1991 when he was diagnosed with a life-threatening heart condition.

Don underwent multiple surgeries, valve replacement, stents and medications to keep his heart going. Doctors told him it was unlikely he would ever work again - but Don proved them wrong. He got a second chance when his doctors recommended him for angioplasty in the early 1990s, when the procedure was still relatively new. The treatment turned his health around and allowed him to return to ministry.

With his wife Joyce by his side, Don has served in interim and supply preaching jobs. Although most of the members in his current church are older, Don is excited that younger persons have joined the church, and he recently had the privilege of performing baptisms.

Don has a long-time association with the Christmas Fund, and recalls how during his time at Calvary Church, the congregation was a strong supporter of the Offering.

Because his health required that he start his annuity earlier than planned, the Koehns' savings were limited and making ends meet on their pension payments has been a challenge. A few years ago, he received his first Christmas "Thank You" Gift Check in the mail. "It makes a difference and it was a great thing, especially at that time of year. What an asset to have that happen."

The Christmas check gives the Koehns a chance to Purchase gifts and give something to someone else after spending the year worrying how they are going to make it through financially.

And, after 56 years of ministry, Don says, "it means something to be remembered in that way, and you feel you are not on a shelf anymore."

The Second Sunday of Advent  
December 6, 2009

