

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 2010.

- Christmas Gift checks will be sent to approximately 900 persons in **2010**. Of those who 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.
- Monthly pension supplementation is being provided to 431 persons. These gifts total \$98,988 per month. A significant part of annual total of \$1,187,856 comes from the Christmas Fund. **(2010 data)**
- Quarterly health premium supplementation is being provided to 292 families, totaling \$177,361 per quarter. All of the funding for health premium supplementation is derived from the Christmas Fund. **(2010 Data)**
- Emergency Grants were provided to 39 individuals and families from January 1 through October 31, 2010, which totaled \$61,717.48.

These statistics reflect annualized projections as of October 31, 2010. The numbers of persons receiving assistance and the totals of assistance payments fluctuate on a monthly basis.

Nancy Miller grew up a "P.K." – a preacher's kid – the daughter of Edwin A. Randle, a second career Unitarian Universalist minister who later became a minister in the United Church of Christ. Growing up, she witnessed first hand the stress of pastoral ministry. She informed her father that she wasn't enough of a masochist to be a minister and chose a career as a botanist instead, later teaching chemistry and biology. When she at last accepted her call to ministry, her father reminded her of that long-ago conversation. "You mean after all these years you've become a masochist?"

Nancy received her Master of Divinity degree in 1983 from the Starr King School for Ministry in Berkeley, California. She was called to serve Trinity Congregational United Church of Christ in Weaverville in Northern California, a town of about 3,000, where she remained until her retirement in 2000. Her father died on the day she was installed as Pastor.

Trinity is remote community with a small population spread out over a wide area. Many of Nancy's parishioners would travel an hour or more over steep mountains and through passes that often became impassible during the winter. Lumber and logging were the main industries and Nancy's background in botany proved helpful. She did encounter some resistance to her ministry because she was a woman. But Nancy and her colleagues built bridges in the ecumenical community, forming a youth group with Weaverville's Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches. Her community has a long history of high unemployment. In the early 1980s, she helped start a food cupboard, and also helped establish the first hospital chaplaincy program and the first ministerial association in the area.

Nancy has long been familiar with the Christmas Fund. She remembers her widowed mother receiving Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks. "She would call up excited to tell me about it," she says. Nancy's Christmas Check "arrives when the fuel bills starts to go up and it starts to get cold. It's a real Godsend." It also allows her to send "a little something at Christmas" to help her loved ones.

Now living in Redding, California, Nancy enjoys spending time on crafts. She remembers the people who touched her life along the way, like the elderly church members who had very little but appreciated and enjoyed life, especially the retired minister Wendell Miller who would preach for a month each year so that she could take time off. They were, she says, "lights" in her life, reflecting the love of Jesus Christ. She experiences that love through the Christmas Fund. "It is kind of like a light that goes on through time."

The First Sunday of Advent
November 28, 2010

