

## 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.

Marcia Dorey didn't start out wanting to be a minister. The Massachusetts native was interested in becoming a seminary librarian. But not long after beginning her studies at Andover Newton Theological School – one of the seven seminaries of the United Church of Christ – she “got caught up in parish ministry,” she recalls. With the loving support of her husband, John, and their three daughters, she completed her Master of Divinity degree and was ordained in 1980 at Middleton Congregational Church in Middleton, Massachusetts, where she served as Director of Christian Education.

In mid-1985, Marcia was called as Pastor of Pilgrim United Church of Christ in Kingston, New Hampshire (now Pilgrim UCC Brentwood-Kingston) at a time when “ordained women were rare,” she says. Her next call was to Christ Church United UCC in Lowell, Massachusetts. The family later relocated to Iowa, where Marcia served two churches – First Congregational UCC in Farragut and Congregational United Church of Christ in Shenandoah – while working as a librarian and pursuing a doctoral degree. But the Doreys longed to return home to the Northeast and in 1997, Marcia was called to serve in Vermont, where was Pastor of two congregations, Wilmington Congregational Church UCC and West Dover Congregational Church.

Not long after returning to Vermont, John began to suffer the effects of diabetes, losing his sight in 2000. Two years later, he began dialysis treatment, followed by a kidney transplant in 2006. The Doreys spent nearly all their savings on John's treatment and medication. Although Marcia continued to work until she retired in 2008, John's illness resulted in financial stress. “We really thought we would be on the street,” she says. After John's death in December 2009, Marcia's household income was reduced by half.

Marcia first learned of the Christmas Fund early in her ministry, while serving at Christ Church United. The Ministerial Assistance she and John received during his illness was “God at work through the Christmas Fund,” she says. A long-time supporter of the Offering, she now shares her personal experience to encourage others to give. “I tell everyone [at church] that they are helping me and they'd better support it!” She adds, “I really think I've been watched over.”

The Third Sunday of Advent  
December 12, 2010

