

Advent II – Peace

Beverly Weinhold

Bringing Beauty from Brokenness

“Some stories are painful and hard to hear. Mine is like that,” says the Rev. Dr. Beverly Weinhold. “In 1997, my life was turned upside down in a moment.” Married for 20 years with teenage twin daughters, Beverly suddenly found herself alone and financially vulnerable. “By the grace of God, I was hired as a part-time lay minister of a United Church of Christ congregation. Witnessing to God’s call in my life, I was urged to pursue ordination.” Graduating from Andover Newton Theological School in 2000, Beverly pastored four churches and team-taught boundary awareness training for clergy.

Relocating from Massachusetts to Kentucky in 2008, Beverly was discerning a coalescing call to combine theology and psychology. A board-certified and licensed clinical counselor before her marriage, she realized that not only could unhealthy boundaries compromise clergy, but they can also create conflict in church communities. Wanting to write a curriculum for churches on this subject, Beverly did doctoral work at Louisville Seminary, graduating in 2011 with a D.Min. in Pastoral Counseling. She retired from pastoral ministry to pursue clinical practice, specializing in adult survivors of abuse. Diagnosed with mononucleosis at 66 and exhausted from recovery, Beverly contracted a serious bacterial infection that kept recurring and forced her to downsize her work to part-time.

It was then that the Pension Boards’ Christmas Fund stepped in to supplement Beverly’s pension and Medicare premium. “Words are wanting when I try to express what this meant to me. A solo person with nowhere to turn, I didn’t expect such generosity. But because of this gift arising out of United Church of Christ congregations, I have been able to make ends meet. Beyond money, your partnership has given me dignity to see myself as more than my problem.”

Beverly reflects on the support offered to her: “A mentor of mine said, ‘most pastors I know have crosses to bear.’ We all do. That’s why Christ calls us to ‘take up your cross and follow me.’ But thanks be to God for faithful partners on the way that, in the words of the American writer Margaret Wheatley, are ‘brave enough to bear witness and turn toward and not away from our struggles.’ This counterintuitive move made all the difference to me. It brought beauty from brokenness. And by God’s grace, I bring it to others who sit in dark places.”

HOW THE FUNDS ARE USED

One of the unique aspects of the Christmas Fund is that the funds provide direct financial assistance to individual UCC clergy and lay church employees – the funds do not support programs or institutions, but people. With your continued generosity, more individuals will receive the support of the church in their time of need.

- **MONTHLY PENSION SUPPLEMENTATION for 325 lower-income retired UCC clergy and lay employees.**

Our retired clergy and lay employees relied on this income supplementation for basic needs such as food, utilities, and living and medical expenses. Funds to meet this need come from three sources: the Christmas Fund Offering, Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM), and the Fund for Ministerial Assistance. The amount of pension supplementation totaled \$1,418,105 in 2014.

- **QUARTERLY HEALTH PREMIUM SUPPLEMENTATION for 209 lower-income retired UCC clergy and lay employees.**

These funds subsidized premiums for the UCC Medicare Supplement Plan with Rx so that individuals could afford and receive quality health care. Assistance totaled \$495,856 in 2014.

- **CHRISTMAS “THANK YOU” GIFT CHECKS given to 510 retired UCC clergy and lay church employees**

This special gift at Christmas time reminds these Veterans of the Cross that they have not been forgotten and that the Church is grateful for their service. Gifts totaled \$203,350 in 2014.

- **EMERGENCY GRANTS for 50 active/retired UCC clergy and lay employees.**

Sometimes those who serve the Church need our help, and emergency funds are available to assist in covering costs that arise unexpectedly – for example, large medical expenses, or home damage resulting from natural disasters. Emergency assistance totaled \$91,416 in 2014.

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