



EMPLOYEE

NEWS & VIEWS

OPERATING AT THE
INTERSECTION OF
FAITH AND FINANCE

A Quarterly Update from the Pension Boards

Winter 2018

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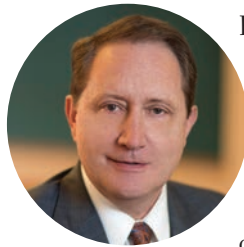


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A Message from the President/CEO: A Matter of Trust



For 104 years, the Pension Boards has served those who have faithfully served our Church. Our long-standing relationship with you, our members, is built on trust. Members entrust their hard-earned resources to us; we strive to earn your continued trust every day, in every facet of our ongoing work.

We are all witnessing shifting paradigms in the life of the Church in the 21st century. These changes are reflected in the ways that persons prepare for ministry; in new models of congregational life that are both challenging and exciting; in the restructuring of church-related institutions to better fulfill their core mission.

The Pension Boards, too, is a changing organization. As this article is written, the Board of Trustees is concluding a three-day retreat focusing on the strategic plan adopted in 2015. Each member of our senior staff is also working within their departments and as a management team to set organizational objectives and action plans. Together, we are exploring how we can more effectively meet the needs of today's Church and those who serve it.

One major upcoming change will be in the way that we communicate information to you about your Annuity Plan account and other benefits information. As you may recall from

the last issue of *Employee News & Views*, beginning in April, the Pension Boards will move to electronic delivery as the default means of providing members with their quarterly accumulation statements. (Please see the box on p. 4 for information on accessing electronic statements.) Members who wish to receive statements by mail will be able to select that option by signing in to their accounts on the Pension Boards' website.

Print publication of *Employee News & Views* will also cease after this issue. Please watch your inbox for e-newsletters, which will be introduced in the coming months.

Maintaining trust is important in times of change. As we meet and interact with persons throughout the United Church of Christ, we hear members affirm their trust in, and appreciation for, the Pension Boards. At the start of a new year, we reaffirm our commitment to you, our members, to continue to provide valued services from the intersection of faith and finance that lead to your greater financial security and wellness.

The staff and Trustees of the Pension Boards join me in wishing you and your loved ones a healthy and hope-filled 2018. Thank you for your trust.

Best regards,

Brian R. Bodager
President/CEO

The Pension Boards

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What Now?

David A. Klassen, Chief Investment Officer

January is the time of year when predictions are made. Anecdotally, I personally have been asked more often during the recent holidays: Why?

The year 2017 was both surprising and unique, with not a single month in which the U.S. stock market, as represented by the Standard & Poor's (S&P) 500 Index, was negative. The largest sell-off during the year only amounted to 2.5%! The last comparable period was 1995, with 11 months up and only November down. With the current administration taking full credit for the advance, and with implications for the tax changes being factored into prices since its passage, it is worth asking "What now?"

In the past year, this column has emphasized global diversification as a prudent investment practice, and 2017 saw a dramatic illustration of those benefits. Those of you with equity investments (through the Equity Fund, Balanced Fund, Northern Trust Global Sustainability Index Fund (GSIF) or one of our Target Annuity Date (TAD) Funds) have noticed the benefit to your retirement balance in 2017.

But if the question is "What now?" the implication is that something must be done. And the answer can only be: "It depends."

One priority for 2018 is to continue responsible, sustainable, and profitable investing on your behalf through the Faith and Finance initiative, articulated in our Mission Statement. This course of action was outlined again with our Investment Committee in August 2017, in which staff laid out our work with consultant Goldman Sachs Asset Management and its impact investing arm, Imprint Capital. Our managers are strongly encouraged to adhere to United Nations Principles for Responsible Investing (UNPRI) standards, especially when it comes to integrating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors into security selection and analysis. We also invest positively, in private markets in our Annuities and through our Green Bond (environmentally-focused) fixed-income investments.

A second focus is to provide tools to improve your retirement outcomes through the right asset allocation, or asset mix. Asset allocation can apply to the mix of domestic and global equities.

For you, it is likely more important to have the mix of assets appropriate to your financial circumstances and objectives. One way to help you achieve your financial

goals is by offering complimentary financial planning services available to actively-contributing Annuity Plan members through Ernst & Young. Another way is through the use of the Target Annuity Date Funds.

TAD Funds adjust the allocation among stocks, bonds, and stable value assets, depending on your timeline to retirement. PBUCC's TAD Funds currently make up 10% of active employee assets. According to Northern Trust, 35% of participants in retirement plans above \$1 billion use funds of this type. The primary benefit? The reduced need to ask, "What now?" as the five TAD Funds adjust naturally and automatically over your working life. Put another way, these Funds deliver on expectations by enabling you to match your retirement horizon, and then enjoy the benefits from dedicated staff selecting the best asset mix and managers. You will hear more about this in early 2018.

As always, we thank you for your confidence in us and will continue to work to position your retirement options to benefit from the benefits of global diversification, best in class asset allocation, and through Faith and Finance at the Pension Boards.



The Bold Witness of Faith

Rev. Richard E. Walters, Director, Corporate Social Responsibility

Although tied to social responsibility, social justice witness, and sustainable investment in a "just world for all," PBUCC's mission and message goes beyond the context of our benefit plans alone and touches on the broader concerns of the church in an age that needs the bold witness of people of faith.

As a member of the PBUCC Speakers' Bureau, I often speak about the power of "two" – multiplying the return on investment from our plans to include not only financial well-being, but also a better world. That's because of our commitment to investing in a way that encourages social responsibility, the transition to a low carbon economy, and a more just world for all.

I also speak about "awareness." It is important for others to become aware of the ways in which PBUCC is working on the issues they care about, engaging in bold action to bring about justice in the midst of a world torn by strife. Inevitably people are surprised, both that PBUCC is engaged with the issues, and that we are doing something constructive, purposeful, and powerful to bring about change.

Finally, I like to speak because it brings me into direct contact with plan members, others in the church engaged in justice work, and those pastors and lay workers on the front lines of living out the gospel in ministry, service, and caring. I learn from

you, hear your concerns, respond to your questions and join you in worship, song, and social times. These are the best of times in my ministry!

I am available to speak to your congregation or group about any number of topics that may be of interest. I encourage you to contact us and take advantage of our Speakers Bureau to arrange a speaker or presenter from among a talented group of PBUCC Trustees, staff, and UCC colleagues who care about your issues and the witness of the church. Visit the Speakers Bureau online at http://bit.ly/PB_Speakers.



Helping UCC Ministers Balance Life and Ministry

Rev. Dr. Jane Heckles, CREDO Coordinator

According to the UCC Center for Analytics, Research and Data (CARD), ministers spend an average of 48 hours per week engaging in ministry-related work. They spend two-thirds of their time in preaching and worship; congregant care, and other caring activities; leadership and coordination; and much more. The stresses inherent in ministry can often affect a minister's personal health and the vibrancy of their God-given call.

The Pension Boards-United Church of Christ CREDO (PBUC CCREDO) program offers authorized United Church of Christ (UCC) ministers holistic wellness. In this learning community, they will assess areas in their lives that may need balancing, refocusing, or realigning so they can serve their church well. It is a benefit for authorized ministers who participate in both PBUC C's Annuity and Health Plans, and who are between the ages of 30 and 58, with at least three years of ministerial service.

160 Strong!

In the two years since its inception, PBUC C CREDO is growing strong, helping 160 ministers achieve spiritual, vocational, physical and psychological, and financial wellness. And, the 160 clergy who have

participated so far all agree that this highly-rated benefit program has rejuvenated their life and ministry!

Here's what some participants had to say:

"This attention and focus [of the PBUC C CREDO seminar] has reset my commitment to my well-being as a foundation for ministry."

"I would describe this experience as both personally and professionally transformative. My expectations of the seminar were centered around learning new things, but I ended up not just learning but changing in perspective, in practice, and in nearly all aspects of my life."

Healthy Leaders for Healthy Churches

The PBUC C CREDO program affirms a core value that healthy leaders are essential to healthy churches, and also affirms PBUC C's mission to partner with those engaged in the life of the church to provide valued services that lead to greater financial security and wellness.

Thirty members are selected from around the country to participate in each PBUC C CREDO seminar, with two seminars offered each year. The program begins with a holistic self-assessment on four interrelated

dimensions of wellness. Each PBUC C CREDO group gathers for a seven-day residential seminar led by an experienced faculty team comprised of UCC clergy and laypersons who are especially gifted in each component of the curriculum.

Through faculty presentations, small groups, worship, workshops, personal reflection, and one-to-one consultations, members return home with renewed spirits and a PBUC C CREDO Covenant, a culminating personal plan based on the participant's CREDO experience, to improve their well-being.

About PBUC C CREDO

PBUC C CREDO is extensively subsidized by PBUC C funds earmarked for member education. Travel, tuition, and private accommodations are included. A \$500 fee is covered by the participant; scholarship grants are available. However, if you are currently a participant in another PBUC C leadership education program (e.g., NGLI, MFVI), you are not eligible for PBUC C CREDO.

Visit www.credo.pbucc.org now to apply for 2018 seminars, and read the PBUC C CREDO booklet. For further questions or information, email credo@pbucc.org.

Ministers Financial Vitality Initiative Update

Rev. Darrell Goodwin, Program Director

We are excited to announce that the inaugural class of the Ministers' Financial Vitality Initiative (MFVI) Program One began its work in the last quarter of 2017.

This cohort is comprised of 30 pastoral leaders representing significant diversity and highlighting the bright future of our church. The inaugural group spans over half the Conferences in the United Church of Christ, and its participants are almost 50% people of color, 60% women, and significant percentages of LGBT persons and individuals living with disabilities. These pastoral leaders also work in the various settings of the Church from the National Setting to Conferences, local churches, and community nonprofits.

MFVI participants were notified of their acceptance before the Thanksgiving holiday. One participant stated, "Wow!

This is such blessing, especially at this particular moment in my life. I look forward to growing in financial awareness throughout this program." They have already registered on the *Ernst & Young Financial Planning Center*® website, are completing their Financial Wellness Assessments, and are eagerly participating in a dedicated MFVI Facebook group.

The Facebook group will be a place for participants to form a supportive community and access information about monthly webinars and articles on financial vitality. In the first month, participants read an article on "The Five Steps to Building a Budget" and accessed a webinar on "13 Ways to Manage Your Life with Your Paycheck."

MFVI excitement is building! "I have always considered myself 'good' at managing money,"

noted one participant, "but my approach has never been as structured and has always been short-term and now this article gives me the possibility of long-term planning." We expect this group will have even more insights, be stretched toward sustainable financial vitality, and serve as a resource for other pastoral leaders.

MFVI Program Two launched in mid-January 2018. Program Two is a grant program (up to \$1,000) for 100 pastors whose congregations commit to raising a matching amount. Please visit the Pension Boards website http://bit.ly/MFVI_FAQs for more information.





Frank Loiacono, Director, Health Plan Operations

New Member Assistance Program

Effective January 1, 2018, the Pension Boards introduced a new benefit that provides personal short-term assistance to UCC Non-Medicare Plan participants and their eligible family members, when faced with life's unexpected challenges.

The Member Assistance Program + Work/Life Program or MAP+Work/Life, offered through Health Advocate, a leading clinical health advocacy company, is a no-cost benefit that gives you confidential access to licensed professional counselors or work/life specialists. Through in-person visits, and unlimited, confidential phone consultations, these specialists can walk you through any of life's temporary setbacks. If long-term assistance is needed, you can be assured that a counselor will make the appropriate, cost-effective referrals to meet your specific needs. For more information, please contact Health Advocate at **1.877.240.6863**.

New Medical Plan ID Cards

Participants in the UCC Non-Medicare Medical Plan were mailed new identification cards from Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield in December. Please use your new card to obtain medical services from your providers in 2018. Your Highmark card now includes a contact number on the back for the new Member Assistance Program (see above). If you did not receive a new ID card, please contact Highmark BCBS Customer Service at the number listed in the box at the right of this page.

Flexible Spending Account

As of January 1, Highmark became the administrator of the Flexible Benefit Plan

for UCC Ministries (the Flexible Spending Account or FSA). Participants in the FSA can manage their accounts online by logging in at **www.highmarkbcbs.com**.

Once registered on the Highmark website, you'll be able to view account balances and reimbursement summaries, as well as submit claims and supporting documentation. Debit cards, for use in making payments to your provider at the time of service, were mailed to participants in mid-December. If you haven't received your new FSA debit card, or to request additional cards, please contact Highmark Customer Service.

Please note that claims to National Associates for services received during 2017 must be submitted by March 31, 2018 for reimbursement.

Healthy Stewards Wellness Program

Healthy Stewards is the UCC Medical Plan's well-being philosophy, rooted in the biblical understanding that we are called to be stewards of all our resources, including our health. The Plan offers a well-being improvement program through Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield that provides participants with free information and tools needed to make positive lifestyle choices.

The Healthy Stewards program consists of:

- » an online Wellness Profile;
- » setting a health goal with a Health and Wellness Coach either by phone or online; and
- » a biometric screening test via a home test kit, a LabCorp voucher, or a Physician's Results Form.

In 2018, Non-Medicare Plan participants and their eligible spouses/partners can earn up to \$300 each (\$100 for each component listed above) by participating in the Healthy Stewards program. **Note:** The 2018 Healthy Stewards program will wrap up on September 30, 2018; please plan on completing your activities by this date. For more information, log in to your Highmark account at **www.highmarkbcbs.com**.

Highmark Blues on Call and Customer Advocacy

An important benefit for UCC Non-Medicare Plan participants is the Highmark Blues on Call program. Blues on Call is a nurse helpline available to answer your medical care questions, including:

- » new disease diagnosis;
- » advice on treating injuries or illness;
- » weight management programs;
- » coordinating care for hospital services;
- » locating physicians and hospitals, and connecting multiple providers with necessary information;
- » coordinating follow-up care after a hospital visit;
- » and more.

Blues on Call services are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, by calling **1.888.258.3428**.

Contact Highmark Customer Service at **1.866.763.9471** for questions about your Medical Plan coverage or to request Health and FSA Plan ID cards.

Electronic Quarterly Statements Coming in April

Effective April 2018, the Pension Boards is moving to electronic distribution of quarterly Annuity Plan accumulation statements for all members.

Statements will be available electronically on the Pension Boards website and members will receive an email notification when their statements are available. To access your statements, please:

- » Sign in to your member account by clicking on the sign in box on the upper right hand corner of our home page at **www.pbucc.org**.

- » **Note:** If you have not yet created a sign in account, you may create your account by clicking on the sign in box on the home page, and following the instructions for new users. You will need to have your 7-digit Pension Boards member ID number to set up an account.
- » Once you have signed in to the site, click on **My Benefits** in the navigation bar at the top of the page. You will be directed to a new page.
- » On the new page, click on **View My Pension and Benefits**. You will again be

directed to another page, where you will see your total accumulation amount under **My Balance**.

Members who wish to receive quarterly statements by mail will soon have the option to request postal delivery by signing in to their accounts, clicking on **View My Pension and Benefits**, and selecting mail delivery on the left side of the web page under **I Want To...**

If you have any questions please contact the Pension Boards Member Services Department at **1.800.642.6543**.