

Newsletter of the
Association of Retired
Ministers and Spouses



To ARMS!

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How Does General Conference Action Affect Your Pension?

The Special Session of the United Methodist General Conference that met Feb. 23-26 in St. Louis acted on a report from the Commission on a Way Forward on issues concerning human sexuality and church unity.

Two pension-related petitions that were approved by the conference included:

Petition 90016 - requires local churches that leave the UMC to pay a proportional fair share of the annual conference's unfunded pension liability to the annual conference. This payment is designed to account for the investment and other risks that the local church is leaving to its conference.

Petition 90017 - applies to active clergy who leave the UMC. The vested pension benefits of these clergy will be transferred to an individual account in the United Methodist Personal

Investment Plan (UMPIP), a voluntary defined contribution plan maintained by Wespath.

For most participants in the current retirement system nothing will change, according to Wespath. If you are receiving pension or annuity payments as a retiree, surviving spouse or other beneficiary, your benefits are not changing. The benefit coverage of active clergy who remain fully connected to the UMC will also remain the same.

For active clergy who leave the denomination (either voluntarily or otherwise), the retirement benefits they have earned up to the date they leave will be preserved, but converted to an individual account balance, as previously explained.

The legislation was intended to accomplish two things:

1. Provide clergy who leave with a portable retirement benefit that can grow with market returns for their years served in the UMC, and
2. Free annual conferences from pension-related risks attributable to clergy who leave the UMC.

Widows, widowers and other survivors currently receiving pension or annuity payments will also continue to receive their current payments. There is no change in their pension benefits as a result of General Conference 2019.



More info about General Conference is available on the web at www.umc.org.

An Answer to Prayer



If you're like me, you're skeptical about anything that sounds exceptionally promising. As the old adage goes, "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is."

Not so with The **Shepherd's Fund**. Here is a safety net for retired clergy and spouses facing financial needs related to health issues. I am pleased to report that it is everything it claims to be.

When Sharon and I were accepted for a Shepherd's Fund grant it felt like a weight was lifted from our shoulders. Every year medical costs went up,

along with everything else, but our resources couldn't keep pace. The grants we received enabled us to catch up where we'd fallen behind, and to take on some treatment options we thought we could never afford.

There are three key health areas for which Medicare provides sparse coverage: eyeglasses, hearing aids, and dental procedures. Investigating dental insurance, we discovered the monthly cost wouldn't fit our budget. With the Shepherd's Fund, however,

we are now having these procedures done. The same is true with hearing aids. When Sharon got hers years ago, I didn't need them. A recent audiology exam revealed, however, that my needs have now changed. With the aid of our grant, I have been able to acquire hearing aids I couldn't otherwise afford.

For us, the Shepherd's Fund has been an answer to prayer. Maybe it can be for you, too. I would highly recommend applying for a grant.

— *Hugh Harris, Richmond*

"Pastors are called to be shepherds of a flock, and this is a fund for them...It's really important to us that we help them whenever and however we can."

— *Philip Tisdale
The Shepherd's Fund*

Shepherd's Fund Offers Pastors Financial Help

Shepherd's Fund is a new ministry out of Georgia that an anonymous donor established to offer grants to retired and/or disabled

UM clergy and spouses in financial crisis due to medical expenses. Up to \$10,000 per year per person is available. To

apply for a grant, contact John Fuller, Exec. Dir. of VA United Methodist Pensions, Inc. (VUMPI), at 804-521-1100.

The Hidden Gift of Exercise

One of the great provisions in the United Health Care program we Virginia Conference retirees and spouses have is access to **Silver Sneakers**. This is an exercise/fitness workout three or four times a week that emphasizes balance, core development, mild

cardio, and body coordination. The hourly sessions use rubber balls, weights and stretching bands. The instructors have been trained by Silver Sneakers and bring professional skills to their leadership.

My wife Pat and I have been enrolled for two years and look forward to these energetic workouts.

We believe it has contributed to our good health in real ways. Best of all, the program is free as part of your health insurance coverage or covered under Medicare. Check out the Silver Sneakers web site for a location near you.

— *Dick Faris, Charlottesville*



In the Spotlight

Retirement Can't Stop John's Trains

The Rev. John Siegle is retired from pastoral ministry now, but he hasn't laid aside his love of model trains. Stroll into his Lynchburg basement and you'll think you entered another world full of train whistles, lighted houses, trees, and brooks.

His interest in rail-roading began as a child when Santa delivered a Lionel train to him and his two brothers. Later, he "bought out" his brothers' interest with money he earned delivering papers.

Over the years, his interest grew, and he built portable tables for his



John at the controls of his model train layout.

countless tracks and buildings. Now, in retirement he's able to have a whole room devoted to his passion.

His buildings and landscapes are constructed of materials he's gathered in his many travels. Homes have interior furnishings; stores have shelves and stocked fruit bins and

coolers. Streams have fishermen and canoes.

He's now a Master Model Railroader (MMR) with scores of earned certificates on his wall to prove it. He says, "I am grateful to all the hobby people for adding a treasured dimension to my life, and yes, the train from Santa is still on my layout!"

Life is a constant journey, from birth to death. The landscape changes... But the train keeps moving. Life is the train, not the destination.

- Paulo Coelho

In Memoriam remembering those who have died since our last report

Retired Clergy

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| James W. Smith III (09/07/33) RE | Oct. 24, 2018 |
| Philip G. Godwin (04/06/35) RL | Oct. 31, 2018 |
| Edward S. Van Dyck (04/23/47) RE | Nov. 03, 2018 |
| Malcolm L. Yaple (03/09/29) RE | Nov. 14, 2018 |
| Troy Mickey White (10/24/37) RL | Dec. 15, 2018 |
| Henry E. Riley (06/02/32) RE | Dec. 18, 2018 |
| Eugene O. Setchel (04/18/31) RE | Dec. 31, 2018 |
| Deroy Campbell (09/17/28) RE | Jan. 19, 2019 |
| Gerald M. Vaiden (07/01/35) RE | Jan. 22, 2019 |
| David J. Palmer (09/17/27) RE | Jan. 30, 2019 |
| Reginald H. Potts (07/22/24) RE | Feb. 13, 2019 |
| David B. Camden (01/23/31) RE | Feb. 16, 2019 |
| C. Douglas Pillow (4/1/28) RE | March 25, 2019 |

Spouses of Retired Clergy

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Dolores H. Jones (Rev. Harry Jones) | April 22, 2018 |
| Susan L. Culpepper (Rev. Robert K. Culpepper) | June 08, 2018 |
| Betty Wadsworth (Rev. Anthony Wadsworth) | Nov. 04, 2018 |
| Peggy Jones (Rev. Leroy Jones) | Dec. 05, 2018 |
| Patricia Hepler (Rev. William Hepler) | Dec. 06, 2018 |
| Kay Mayton (Rev. Wilfred Mayton) | Jan. 22, 2019 |
| Sylvia Shull (Rev. Don Shull) | March 23, 2019 |

Clergy Widows/Widowers

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Doris Epps (Rev. William Epps) | Sept. 11, 2018 |
| Carole Hindman (Rev. William Hindman) | Oct. 08, 2018 |
| Mary H. Gee (Rev. Gene Gee) | Nov. 09, 2018 |
| Marion Hamm (Rev. John Hamm) | Dec. 25, 2018 |
| Marion Moody (Rev. Henry Moody) | Jan. 14, 2019 |
| Dorothy Chidester (Rev. Augustus Chidester) | Jan. 20, 2019 |
| Jane Meloy (Rev. David Meloy) | Jan. 22, 2019 |
| Dovie R. Hedrick (Rev. Roy Hedrick) | Feb. 14, 2019 |





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Want to support ARMS?

Send suggested donation of \$10 per person to:
John Shappell,
Treasurer
221 Delaney Dr.
Suffolk, VA
23434

Make check payable to "Virginia Conference UMC" with "ARMS donation" in memo line.

Annual ARMS Retreat to Focus on Health of Body, Mind, and Soul

This year's annual ARMS retreat will focus on health and wholeness issues around the theme, **"It Is Well with My Body, Mind, and Soul."** Scheduled for Wed.-Thurs., **Oct. 9-10, at Eagle Eyrie** in Lynchburg, the retreat will feature guest speaker Richard Cordle who is an experienced personal trainer with certification in both that area and nutrition. He served as treasurer of Chesterfield County for 25 years, and since retirement has enjoyed speaking to groups about fitness. He has also served as music director for several churches.

Alexis Fathbruckner will be leading our worship. She is a retired minister and has led retreats. Also, John Fuller, Executive Director of Virginia United Methodist Pensions, Inc., will join us again to talk about pension and insurance plans and benefits.

Watch for more details in the August edition of *To Arms!* newsletter. In the meantime, save the date. We hope you will join us for the fun, fellowship, learning, and worship with your retired colleagues and friends.

