

FINANCIAL FOUNDATIONS



MENTAL HEALTH – TAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF

Focus on How You Feel

The mind-body connection is powerful. Tending to your emotional well-being can help you feel better physically, and vice versa. Emotional well-being includes the ability to manage your feelings and related behaviors, cope effectively with stress and adapt to change.

Take Care of Yourself

If you're feeling anxious, stressed or depressed, it's OK to talk about it. Asking for guidance and support is the first step to feeling better.

- 1) Talk to someone you trust—a friend, family member, or colleague.
- 2) Schedule a doctor visit—be open and honest about how you're feeling.
- 3) Connect with a counselor and other resources through the **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**.

There is a dedicated team at Optum Health that has been trained specifically for the HealthFlex EAP to assist United Methodist Church clergy members and their families. The dedicated team can be reached at **1-866-881-6800**. The EAP also can be accessed through the Virgin Pulse app. **Each covered family member can take advantage of 8 FREE sessions per issue, per year.** Pre-Authorization is required.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers a variety of support services around emotional well-being. One of the top benefits is confidential counseling to help manage issues in your personal or professional life that may impact your work, family, and ministry.

Data from Optum Health, the Employee Assistance Program offered through HealthFlex, shows that for clergy, anxiety, depression, work/life balance, and relationship issues were reported as top factors contributing to mental and emotional stress over the past year. The pandemic has required major changes in ministry, altering worship, pastoral care, funerals, meetings, and more. In addition, the polarization of political and societal issues may have added to the stresses within the congregations and communities, clergy serve. **Whether you are clergy on the conference health insurance or not PLEASE TAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF!**

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PENSION & HEALTH REBATES COMING IN JUNE!

Because of fantastic investment returns and lower than expected claims, the Board of Pension has approved \$5.3 million in rebates for churches and pastors. The Board believes that this investment into our churches at this critical time is the best use for this money.

If your church paid for Conference health insurance and/or pension (Funds 4 and 3) during 2019-20, your church will be receiving a rebate. The exact amount and details have been sent to your pastor and is based on what your church actually paid in 2019-20. Charges served by a full-time pastor will receive a rebate of approximately \$38,000. Charges served by a $\frac{3}{4}$ -time pastor or $\frac{1}{2}$ -time pastor will receive approximately \$14,000 or \$7,000 respectively. Pastors enrolled in the Conference health insurance and/or pension will be receiving a personal rebate as well. Rebates received by churches are not subject to apportionments.

PREPARE FOR AN UNEXPECTED GIFT OF CASH – KNOW YOUR CHURCH STORY

Once your church receives the pension and health rebate, are you in a position to care for this gift wisely? Gifts often come to a church unexpectedly and it is not uncommon to want to use this gift as a quick fix to a structural issue of the church (i.e. new carpet, a leaky roof, boiler or furnace repair, etc.). As important as many of these fixes are, have you considered investing the dollars wisely to prepare your church for future unexpected expenses or new and inspiring ministries?

To help your church best identify ways to spend or invest your unexpected gift is to know your church story. Take a minute to consider these questions: What is the mission and vision of your church and what is important for the life of your church community? How will these dollars best be used to enhance the ministries of your church in finding ways to change the lives of those who you are reaching? Do we know our Church story?

EDUCATION DEBT REDUCTION GRANT EXPANDS!

If you are a pastor with student debt from almost any higher educational experience, you may be eligible to reduce this debt by \$25,000 over five years by applying for the Investing in Leaders Resource Grant due August 1st. Our grant from Lilly Endowment combined with our partnership with the Board of Ordained Ministries expanded educational debt reduction grant opportunities from \$5,000 per year for three years to five years! Don't leave money on the table. The Investing in Leaders Resource Grant application can be found at <https://www.dakotasumc.org/resources/forms/192>. Apply Now!

FROM OPERATIONAL LIFE SUPPORT TO FINANCIALLY FIT

Join Sheri Meister and Jeff Pospisil in-person or online for their Workshop at Annual Conference on Saturday, June 12. There are two time-slots to choose from: 10:30am (Central) and 2:45pm (Central).

Does it ever feel like your church is financially one or two donors away from being on operational life support? Can you imagine what it would feel and look like to have the church in a healthy place financially where you are no longer just hoping to survive one more year? Instead, you are able to hope and dream about the future of your church. Sheri Meister and Jeff Pospisil will walk through some proven methods to boost income, control expenses, and become a financially fit church. This workshop will be led by Sheri Meister, president and CEO of the Dakotas and Minnesota United Methodist Foundations and Jeff Pospisil, executive director of Finance and Administration for the Dakotas Conference. Find more information and register at <https://www.dakotasumc.org/annual-conference/workshops-and-learning-opportunities>