



Conference Forum—April 2019



Wespath

BENEFITS | INVESTMENTS

Clergy Financial Well-Being

National Initiative on Economic
Challenges Facing Pastoral Leaders

Background



- “Reduce or alleviate some of the key financial pressures that impair effective pastoral leadership”
- “Improve financial literacy among parish pastors”
- National and judicatory grants

Collaborative Effort Led by Wespath



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HIGHER EDUCATION & MINISTRY
General Board of Higher Education and Ministry
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

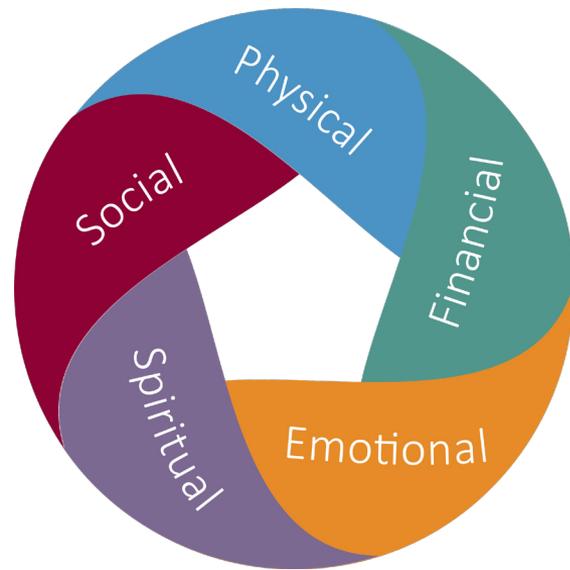


Why It Matters and Why Now

- Pastors more effectively lead congregations when they have basic financial literacy and are free of major personal financial burdens.

Lilly Endowment, Inc. research finding

- Holistic Health & Well-Being: Financial stress and personal debt contribute to emotional distress and physical illness.



Why It Matters and Why Now

- Wespath is proposing a change to a Defined Contribution retirement plan at the 2020 General Conference
 - Increased need for ongoing, effective financial education to prepare for retirement
 - Financial education needs to be taught at all stages of ministry to ensure the financial well-being of clergy



Two Key Strategies in 2015-2018

1. Regional Pilot Projects

- Encourage conferences to experiment with financial education for new and experienced clergy

2. Debt Avoidance

- Excellence in Ministry Scholarship – almost 400 recipients in first two years
 - Ministry candidates avoid debt caused by seminary tuition
 - Financial planning required
 - Conferences and UM Foundations invest in its future leaders

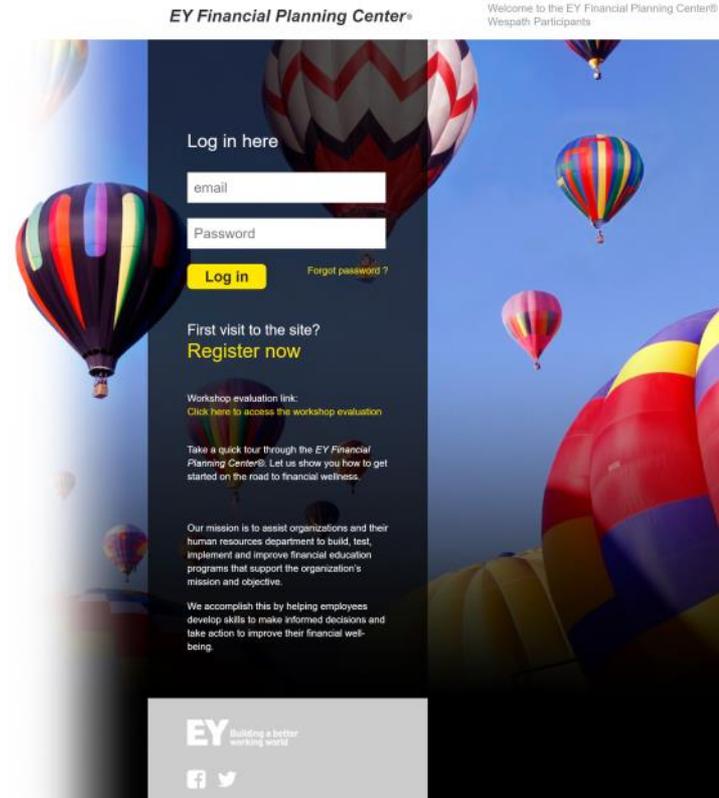


Local Project Award Recipients to Date

- Georgia Foundation
- Wisconsin Foundation
- Foundation of New England
- East Ohio Foundation
- Mississippi Foundation
- Foundation of West Virginia
- West Ohio Conference (2)
- Alabama-West Florida Foundation
- Susquehanna Stewardship Foundation
- Kentucky Foundation/First UMC Lexington

Examples of UMC Projects Awarded Grants

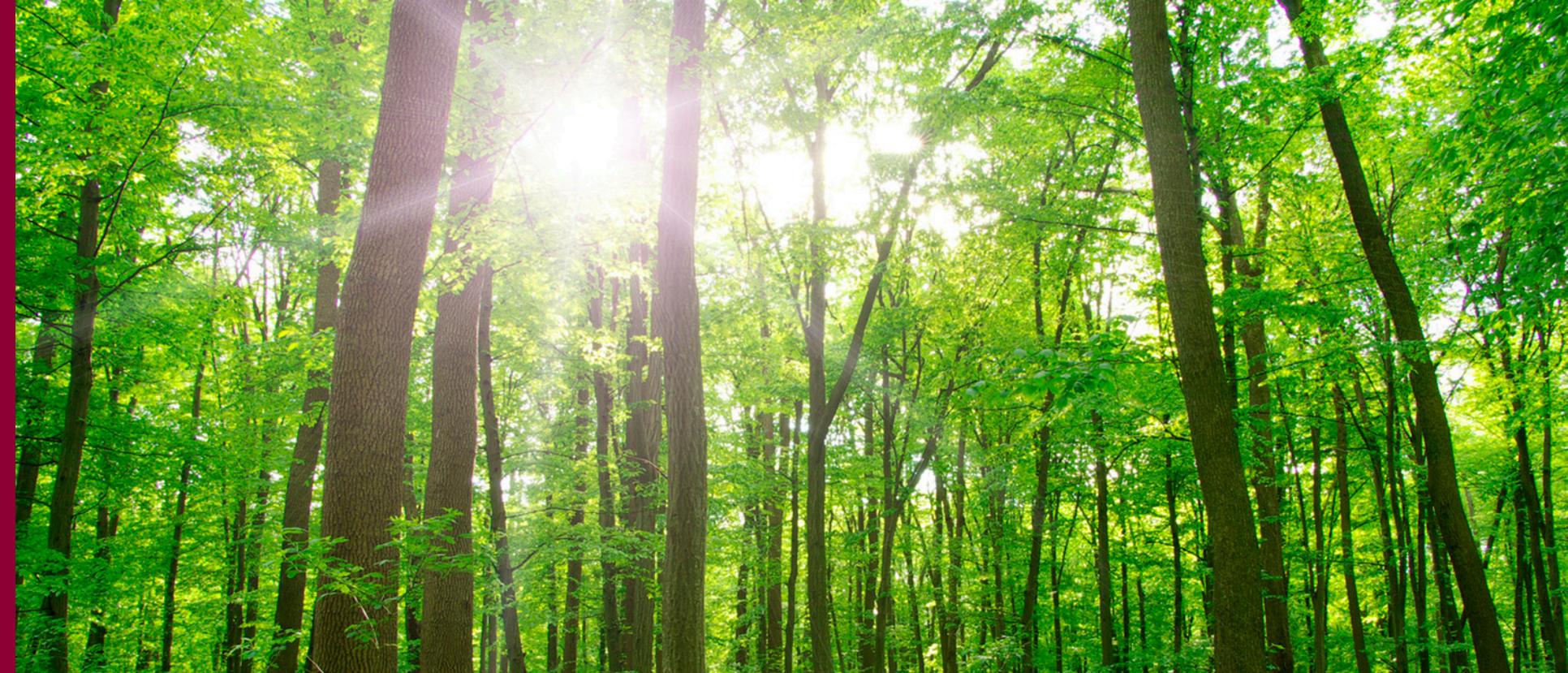
- Financial seminar followed by study groups and reporting from participants
- Incentives for doing financial planning with EY
- Various financial planning workshops and events
- Internship program covering seminary costs and providing church leadership experience



Excellence in Clergy Leadership Scholarship

- Nearly **400 recipients** in 2017 – 2018
- Leveraged **\$2.6 million of matching funds** with UM Foundations, conferences and GBHEM
- **33 participating annual conferences**





New Priorities and Goals

Priorities and Goals for 2019-2021

- Expand clergy **debt refinancing** opportunities
- Create a United Methodist financial education **curriculum**
- Integrate financial education into **pastoral training, candidacy** and **residency** programs.
- Grow the Excellence in Clergy Leadership **Scholarship** Program



Clergy Debt Refinancing

Expand student loan and consumer debt refinancing for UM clergy across the U.S.

- Potential partners include:
 - UM Foundations - Current programs active in: Iowa, Western North Carolina, New England – Preacher's Aid Society, North Carolina (new)
 - Annual Conferences
 - UM credit unions and other financial institutions



Financial Education Integration for Clergy

- Increasing and integrating financial education in clergy training programs
 - Partner with Boards of Ordained Ministry
 - Include training in Residency in Ministry programs
 - Course of Study requirements for licensed local pastors
 - Explore assessing financial literacy in 8-Year Assessments (new requirement in the U.S.)



Financial Education Curriculum

- Attributes
 - Both Biblical and practical
 - Fits with UMC beliefs and ideals
 - Affordable and accessible
- Preferred approach
 - Existing program rather than re-invent
 - Ability to adapt or modify for UMC distinctiveness
 - Potential to private label for UMC



Questions and Conversation

- How is your conference engaged in clergy financial health?
- What are primary needs regarding clergy finances in your conference?
- What is your Board of Pensions role in clergy financial well-being?
 - Current role or status
 - Desired role and involvement





Invitation to Get Involved

Opportunities for Involvement

- Participate in Excellence in Clergy Leadership Scholarship
- Help create debt refinancing programs for clergy
- Organize educational efforts for clergy financial proficiency
 - Personal financial matters
 - Congregational finances



Together, let us foster the financial well-being of United Methodist pastoral leaders and equip them to lead financially healthy congregations.



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