



THE BOARD OF PENSIONS
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)



2019 Annual Review

SERVING THROUGH CONNECTION

Making new connections and
strengthening existing ones ...



The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) makes tangible our denomination's commitment to care for those who serve the Church. Every day, we show this commitment through plans and programs that foster a ministry of wholeness — spiritual, health, financial, and vocational well-being.

The membership growth in the Benefits Plan that began three years ago continues. As more employers and more members participate in the plan, we are better able to control costs and steward the financial resources in our care. This powers our support for ministers and employees, and enables us to help build congregational leadership for the future of the Church.

Supporting ministerial leadership clearly demands that we pay attention to the debt that weighs so heavily on our ministers. In 2019, Healthy Pastors, Healthy Congregations rolled out nationally with resounding success. Our goal was to covenant with 500 ministers in three years. But by year-end, we had covenants with 607 ministers and had granted more than \$2.5 million in assistance toward debt reduction.

Congregations continued to call young pastors through Pathways to Renewal, which we introduced mid-2018 to provide the full benefits of Pastor's Participation at greatly reduced dues. And, in 2019, hopeful trends emerged: A total of 70 pastors have received calls through this program and most calls have gone to pastors 33 or younger. In mid-2019, we extended support to 12 church planters and other cultivators of new ministries who are not Pathways-eligible by establishing grants for presbyteries to finance Pastor's Participation for organizing pastors and evangelists.

Expanding support for ministers meant strengthening connections and extending our outreach to communities of color. We partnered with Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary on a Presbyterian CREDO for African American ministers and presented Healthy Pastors, Healthy Congregations in Spanish in Puerto Rico while preparing to deliver it in Korean in 2020.

Growing support for ministers is tied to growing participation in the Benefits Plan. As affiliated employers are essential to growth in participation, we expanded marketing and communications efforts in 2019. We also made technological improvements, crucial to bettering service, and explored product development as we focused on improving our competitive position in the larger marketplace.

Finally, the Board of Pensions Balanced Investment Portfolio ended 2019 with assets totaling a market value of \$10.2 billion. The year capped what was a challenging decade for global investors with a 10-year annual investment return of 8.6 percent for the portfolio. By year-end 2019, \$6.4 billion in benefits had been paid out to members and surviving spouses since 1988, when the portfolio was valued at \$2.1 billion. An eighth consecutive experience apportionment for the Pension Plan was granted in 2020.

The Board today is strong. We are well positioned to care for those who devote their work to answering God's call.

The Reverend Frank Clark Spencer
President

The Reverend Dr. Fairfax F. Fair
Chairperson



2019 In Review

Growth in the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) remained constant in 2019. More PC(USA)-affiliated employers provided benefits through the plan, and more congregations extended plan coverage to non-minister employees. As we stewarded the resources under Board of Pensions care, growth helped us control costs and support ministerial leadership.

GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES



9%

Growth in non-minister members employed by church employers



242

Affiliated employers participating in the Benefits Plan



65,279

Individuals served by the Benefits Plan

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES



3.6%

Pension Plan apportionment



\$10.2B

In Balanced Investment Portfolio



\$7.6M

For 1,245 Assistance Program grants distributed

CHURCH ENGAGEMENT



1,159

Attendees at Board University events



70

New calls created from Pathways to Renewal



358

CREDO participants

CORPORATE STEWARDSHIP



187

Board employees



11,125

Call to Health total participants



52,371

Calls received by call center

A Shared Mission to Serve

RETURNING HOME TO THE BOARD OF PENSIONS FAMILY



Florida Presbyterian Homes (FPH), a PC(USA)-affiliated continuing care retirement community in Lakeland, Florida, had once partnered with the Board of Pensions to offer benefits to its employees, but left several years ago to pursue cost savings with another provider. However, the two organizations, strongly connected by shared Presbyterian values, never entirely lost touch.

Around 2017, FPH started to hear about exciting changes at the Board — a redesigned plan that gives employers more choices and greater flexibility; new benefits offerings; an online wellness program, Call to Health; and a new benefits portal called Benefits Connect that automates and streamlines administrative tasks.

“Our staff is drawn here as a call, not just a place to work. Like the Board of Pensions, we also have a mission to serve, and that reinforces us being together as partners.”

*— Kim Roberts, Human Resources Manager,
Florida Presbyterian Homes*

The buzz about the Board was enough to pique FPH’s interest again. “We started having conversations with the Board and putting some feelers out about the new plan,” said Kim Roberts, human resources manager for FPH. “We were happy to see quite a few positive changes, not only with the benefits products but with the administrative resources as well.”

When FPH’s medical coverage provider increased rates by 25 percent for the following year, the need to make a change became imperative, and in 2019, FPH “returned home” to the Board of Pensions. The organization now offers both the PPO and EPO medical options to its employees.

Instead of an increase in costs, FPH experienced a 10 to 15 percent savings when the organization moved to the Board’s medical coverage. “The financial impact was significant,” not only for FPH, but also for its employees, said Roberts.

“It brought the cost down significantly for our employees, especially for family coverage,” Roberts continued. Employees who could not afford FPH’s previous plan now could afford the coverage through the Board of Pensions.

In addition to the cost savings, FPH and its employees have embraced several features that are included with all three of the Board’s medical options (the PPO, EPO, and HDHP). For example, FPH’s employee participation rate in Call to Health, the Board’s online well-being program, is an impressive almost 70 percent. Roberts appreciates Call to Health’s focus on the four dimensions of wholeness: spiritual, health, financial, and vocational. “The emphasis on wholeness is added value for us,” she said.

Another draw that helped bring FPH back to the Board’s Benefits Plan was the organizations’ shared Presbyterian values and how those values are woven into the plan. Roberts cited as an example the deductibles in the PPO, which are based on salaries so that those with the greatest resources may help those with the least.

“Our staff is drawn here as a call, not just a place to work,” said Roberts. “Like the Board of Pensions, we also have a mission to serve, and that reinforces us being together as partners.”

African American CREDO



PROVIDES UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR DISCERNMENT

The Board of Pensions has long offered its popular CREDO conferences to ministers based on their phase of ministry — recently ordained, mid-career, and late career — so that pastors may cultivate wholeness and better serve the Church. In October 2019, the Board offered a unique opportunity for African American clergy to gather and deepen their relationships with one another while providing dedicated time for reflection and renewal.

Hosted by the Board in partnership with Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary, the CREDO conference drew 17 African American ministers to Roslyn Retreat Center, Richmond, Virginia.

"As a denomination and an agency, we are being intentional about embracing diversity, respecting all people, and ensuring all parts of the Church are being served," said the Reverend Dr. Byron Wade, CREDO conference leader and pastor of Davie Street Presbyterian Church, Raleigh, North Carolina.

African American CREDO was tailored to the audience wherever possible: Fifty percent of the faculty was African American. One workshop emphasized health issues African Americans experience at higher rates than other groups — diabetes and high blood pressure — and examined steps participants can take to help prevent them. Participants also had opportunities to walk, practice mindful eating, meditate, journal, and more.

A crucial element of CREDO is providing a safe space for participants to examine, in small groups, matters that affect their lives and ministries. During these discussions, the common denominators of race and gender disparity led to heartfelt conversations about racism and gender bias.

The Reverend Albert W. Moses, pastor at Matthews Murkland Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, said his small group spoke extensively about the struggles of leading an African American congregation with declining rolls, salary disparities, and the need for presbyteries to manage the merger of congregations in today's changing Church.

"This conference showed us how much we needed to be together. We really appreciated having the opportunity to fellowship, celebrate, and lament with each other. It's different being African American serving in a predominantly Caucasian denomination," said the Reverend Sonya McAuley-Allen, temporary supply pastor at Bellefonte Presbyterian Church, Harrisburg, North Carolina.

"As a denomination and an agency, we are being intentional about embracing diversity, respecting all people, and ensuring all parts of the Church are being served."

— The Reverend Dr. Byron Wades

Many CREDO participants find that God reaffirms their call, and that was the case for Rev. McAuley-Allen. She left CREDO confident that she should be doing exactly what she is doing: parish ministry. That reaffirmation gave her "a sense of clarity and peace of mind," she said, renewing her for the journey ahead — and her life serving others.

Pathways to Renewal

A REAL IMPACT ON REAL PEOPLE



First Presbyterian Church of Franklin's congregation has long had a "keen interest in mission and outreach," said the Reverend Dr. Chris Joiner, FPC Franklin's senior pastor.

Yet for many years, the church, just outside of Nashville, Tennessee, went without a leader dedicated to this growing area of ministry. It fell to Rev. Joiner to accompany church members on their increasingly ambitious mission trips, which included journeys to Lesbos, Greece, to work with Syrian refugees marooned in the camps there.

After returning and sharing their experiences and insights with the congregation, mission members and other congregants began dreaming of ways to expand FPC Franklin's support of this vital ministry.

At about this time, Rev. Joiner heard about the Board of Pensions' Pathways to Renewal program, which brings young ministers into the Benefits Plan through the benefits package Pastor's Participation at substantially reduced dues. The program is designed to provide hope of renewed leadership to small congregations and support to innovative ministries of congregations of all sizes.

*"I am so excited for this opportunity.
And I'm grateful for the Board's help.
It's a gift to the church."*

— Rev. Mary Sellers Shaw,
First Presbyterian Church of Franklin

Any size Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregation that increases ministerial headcount is eligible for Pathways to Renewal if the minister being called is under age 40 and has never previously been enrolled in Pastor's Participation, which includes PPO medical coverage, Pension Plan, Death and Disability Plan.

The financial boost provided by Pathways to Renewal helped decide the question of whether FPC Franklin was ready to expand its pastoral staff. FPC Franklin hired Mary Sellers Shaw as Director of Mission and Outreach out of seminary, and, upon her ordination in March 2019, called her to be Associate Pastor — a new position responsible for leading the church's mission and outreach ministries. She also supports Rev. Joiner in leading worship and providing pastoral care.

"I am so excited for this opportunity," Rev. Shaw said. "And I'm grateful for the Board's help. It's a gift to the church."

Rev. Shaw hit the ground running, leading a mission trip of eight congregants to the U.S.-Mexican border. The group worked with the Presbyterian border ministry Frontera de Cristo, helping to escort immigrants to border security gates, participating in a binational prayer vigil at the border wall, and building their understanding of border realities for immigrants and the churches that seek to serve them.

Barely a month later, Rev. Shaw and another group of congregants helped provide disaster relief in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, where many people still are without homes since tornadoes devastated the area in 2017. She and the others spent a week helping build a home.

Thanks to Pathways, Rev. Shaw is able to join with FPC Franklin staff, congregants, and other community leaders, sharing Christ's compassion both inside and outside the church.

"I like what Pathways is doing for the PC(USA) as well as for FPC Franklin," Rev. Joiner said. "It has a real impact on real people."

Called to Serve

THE NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS AND PLAN MEMBERS



The best piece of advice Yvette Russell-Minor ever received came from her grandmother: You make it work, and then you make it better. “She believed in being the best at what you do, no matter what you do,” Russell-Minor said. “I don’t believe in hanging out in ‘can’t do that,’” Russell-Minor said.

She has run with this advice throughout her 31-year career at the Board of Pensions, first as a benefits representative and now in her current role. As Director of Customer Engagement, Russell-Minor provides guidance to Benefits Plan members and employers, including the Board’s five Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) sibling agencies — the Office of the General Assembly, Investment & Loan Program Inc., Presbyterian Foundation, Presbyterian Mission Agency, and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.

“The word service appears nine times in the Board’s six-page business plan for the years 2019 and 2020,” she said. “That’s us.” Her team is responsible for understanding and responding to both employer and member needs. It includes service representatives, who spend their days on the phones, helping employers navigate plan offerings and assisting members with benefits matters.

The team’s responsibilities grew in 2017. For the first time, employers could pick and choose which benefits to offer. Naturally, this new flexibility added decision-making to the mix — and the need for more guidance.

“People are willing and want to work in new and creative ways to deliver an exceptional customer experience that is impactful and purposeful,” Yvette said. “Service is a hallmark of the Board. We have to anticipate the kinds of questions we’re going to get and be prepared to answer them.” As the Board continues building choice into the plan, keeping it commercially competitive, the representatives are always ready to “serve better,” she said.

“Being prepared requires great dedication because of the growing number of PC(USA)-affiliated employers joining the plan. While churches likely have a volunteer from the congregation handling benefits for pastors and employees (who are often part-time), affiliated employers usually have at least one human resources professional and a mix of employee types.

“That’s a contrast I see,” Russell-Minor said. “It means there’s not one right way to assist the person on the other end of the line. We have to have a deep understanding of the Benefits Plan in order to meet that person where the need is.”

As a young woman in those early years at the Board, Russell-Minor shared what she had learned at a previous employer, and changes came about. “My voice was one that was welcome,” she said, and that helped her grow professionally. “Everyone has a gift, and I learned that I have a gift of service and administration.”

“... there’s not one right way to assist the person on the other end of the line. We have to have a deep understanding of the Benefits Plan in order to meet that person where the need is.”

— Yvette Russell-Minor, Director of Customer Engagement, Board of Pensions

2019 EXECUTIVE TEAM

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Executive Vice President &
Chief Financial Officer

Judith D. Freyer
Executive Vice President, Treasurer, &
Chief Investment Officer

Patricia M. Haines
Executive Vice President &
Chief Benefits Officer

Linda Jacobsen
Senior Vice President, Affiliated Markets

Rev. Dr. John G. McFayden
Executive Vice President &
Chief of Church Engagement

Susan Reimann
Executive Vice President &
Chief Operating Officer

Kelly Riley
Senior Vice President, Plan Operations

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Directors are nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee, and may be elected only by the General Assembly. Terms are typically four years and Directors are eligible for reelection to a second term (* indicates a person serving a second term).



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