



Rev. P.E. Martin

While working in analytical laboratories for a major food processor, a recurring voice seemed to be urging the Rev. P.E. Martin toward pastoral ministry. "A snapshot of me back then would have had two furrows in the ground where my heels were dug in resisting," she says, but the call was persistent. After graduation from Pacific School of Religion and ordination to authorized ministry, P.E. was called to small parishes in the Pacific Northwest. She loved the rhythm of interacting with parishioners, being with them when they needed support, and "though it was overwhelming at times to know I was responsible for the worship part of their spiritual lives, I enjoyed all of it."

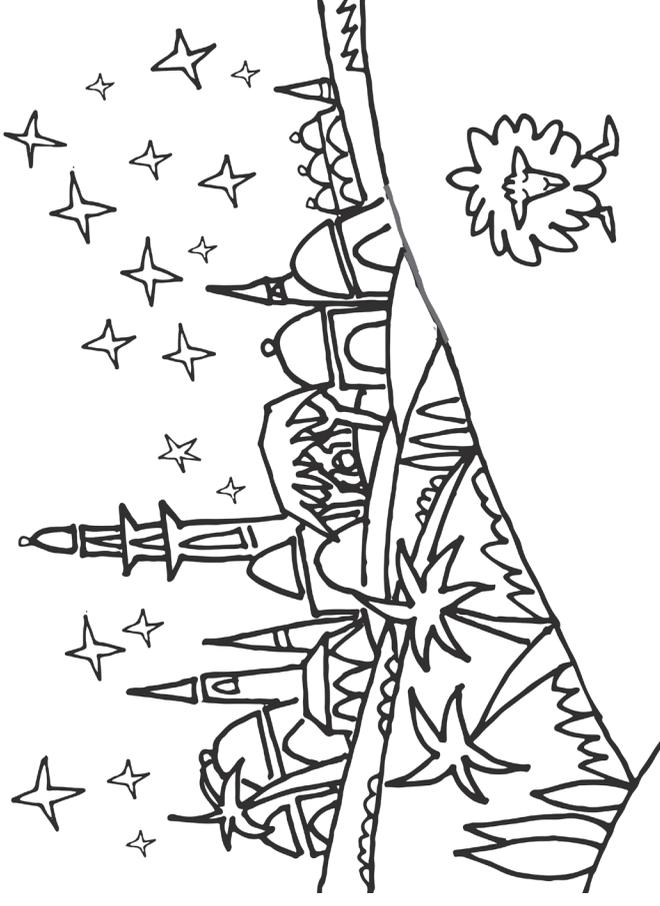
Serving small congregations, however, put a strain on her family's finances. The compensation she received while ministering at a Conference camp provided some relief. When P.E.'s husband died in 2004, "the question of how I would be able to support myself in retirement" became even more urgent. "I really didn't know if the combination of my pension and Social Security would be enough."

To be closer to her son and his family, P.E. moved east to North Carolina the next year, and began the routine paperwork with the Pension Boards in advance of her retirement. That process revealed that the total of all her income sources was still below the annual household baseline, and P.E. was contacted by the Rev. Krista Betz, Director of Ministerial Assistance. Since then, she has received a pension supplement and assistance with health insurance premiums, as well as a "Thank You" gift check at Christmas.

The assistance provided to P.E. through the Christmas Fund "has been a huge help for me, made it possible for me to live in my own modest house in a small town of 10,000, and have enough to meet my obligations each month." She also counts as a blessing the support provided by her Pension Boards Annuitant Visitors. "I am still supported spiritually and helped financially in these latter years of retirement. The generosity of the members and churches of the United Church of Christ touches my heart. I give thanks to God for this united and uniting church."

★ THE CHRISTMAS FUND

for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund



In 2016, gifts to the Christmas Fund enabled

- Small pension supplementation for 448 retired clergy and lay employees (\$1,507,787)
- Health benefits supplementation for 216 retired clergy and lay employees (\$487,338)
- Emergency grants for 50 individuals and families (\$90,927)
- Christmas "Thank You" gift checks to 503 retired clergy and lay employees (\$233,800)