



EMPLOYEE

NEWS & VIEWS

OPERATING AT THE
INTERSECTION OF
FAITH AND FINANCE

A Quarterly Update from the Pension Boards

Fall 2016

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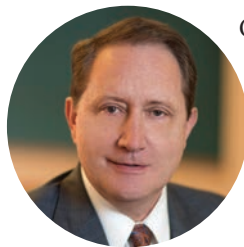


@pensionboards



<http://bit.ly/PB-UCC>

A Message from the President/CEO



Over the past year, you may have noticed the phrase “Operating at the intersection of faith and finance” increasingly in Pension Boards’ communications and materials. This concept is at the core of our mission, vision, and identity – and informs our ongoing work on your behalf. A significant part of that work is to explore “intersection” opportunities that will help us better serve you, our members.

Our Ministerial Assistance programs provide key intersection points with members at various stages of their lives and ministries. Through the Next Generation Leadership Initiative (NGLI), we have the opportunity to help younger clergy develop transformational leadership skills for the 21st century church. (Please see p. 3.) CREDO Seminars offer mid-career clergy a chance to focus on their spiritual, vocational, financial, and physical and psychological well-being. The Annuitant Visitor Program (AVP) touches over 6,000 retired UCC clergy, missionaries, and their spouses/partners each year through visits and calls. (If you are nearing the transition to retirement and would like to know more about the Annuitant Visitor ministry, please see our new video at http://bit.ly/PB_AVP.)

In recent issues of *Employee News & Views*, members have learned about the talented and dedicated women and men who serve on PBUCC’s Board of Trustees. In this issue, I am pleased to introduce you to two more – the Rev. Dr. Geneva M. Butz and the Rev. Dr. Barbara Kershner Daniel.



Rev. Dr. Barbara Kershner Daniel

Barbara was called as Senior Pastor of Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ in

Frederick, Maryland in 2006, after serving UCC churches for 23 years in Pennsylvania. She has served on many United Church of Christ boards and committees and is currently a Trustee of Catawba College. A Pension Boards Trustee since 2003, Barbara is a member of the Executive and Benefits Committees, Chair of the Corporate Social Responsibility Committee, and is also on the newly-formed Faith and Finance Advisory Group. She is active in the Rotary Club of Carroll Creek, Maryland. The full text of Barbara’s interview is available at http://bit.ly/PB_BKD.



Rev. Dr. Geneva M. Butz

Geneva served for 19 years as Pastor of Old First Reformed United Church of Christ in Philadelphia; was Managing Editor of YOUTH Magazine; and was Associate Conference Minister of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference for nearly 10 years. Currently retired, she tutors third graders in reading, mentors a high school student, and coaches pastors for the Center for Progressive Renewal. Elected as a Trustee in 2004, she serves on the Benefits Committee, is a Director of the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance (UCBMA), and a member of the Faith and Finance Advisory Group. Read more at http://bit.ly/PB_GMBQA. I invite you also to read Geneva’s thoughtful reflection on the theme of “Intersections” at http://bit.ly/PB_GMB.

The Trustees and staff join me in thanking you for your service to our Church and for the privilege of serving you.

Best regards,

Brian R. Bodager
President/CEO

The Pension Boards

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Slower Growth, Low Interest Rates, Higher Returns? But Why?

David A. Klassen, Chief Investment Officer



In the three months ending September 30, global equity markets have had very robust performance, building on positive returns earlier in the year. Leaders this time were small-company U.S. equities, such as those represented by the Russell 2000 Index, and emerging markets equities (as represented by the MSCI EM index). Both indices had returns over 9%. Domestic equities (S&P 500 Common Stock Index) and developed international stocks (MSCI EAFE Index) also produced returns ranging from more than 3% to more than 6%. Fixed-income investments had positive returns as well,

especially in the bank loan, high yield, and emerging market debt sectors.

Growth in developed markets like Europe, Japan, and even the U.S. is under pressure. We have also been warning about the limited return potential of fixed-income assets, as a result of already ultra-low interest rates around the world. These are a reflection of the lower growth reality as well as the efforts of central banks to stimulate economies.

So what gives? Two things:

1. Markets were helped by a lessening of June concerns regarding the immediate negative impact of the U.K. vote to leave the European Union. International stocks, especially emerging markets equities, rebounded due to a better outlook and favorable valuations.
2. Central banks around the world, such as the Bank of Japan and U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed), reassured market

participants that global monetary stimulus would continue. The Fed, in particular, has opted to delay the next interest rate rise until December, or possibly into 2017. Negative interest rates in parts of Europe and Japan have also made higher yields in the U.S. and emerging markets more attractive to investors. Our investments have benefitted from this continued trend.

The largest story for markets – and the news in general – is elections, primarily the U.S. Presidential election. For the fourth quarter of 2016, we still hold our view that investors should expect higher volatility than what we have seen during the past few years. Going forward, PBUCC managers and investment staff remain vigilant and continue to monitor asset price levels and trends on your behalf.



Faith and Finance Initiative

Rev. Richard E. Walters, Director, Corporate Social Responsibility

"Faith and finance" is a key concept and core principle of PBUCC's identity and mission. Operating at the intersection of faith and finance is what differentiates the products and services that PBUCC provides from retirement and benefits plans available in the commercial financial services marketplace.

The Pension Boards' faith and finance initiative, which grew out of our 2015 strategic plan, is now in full swing. The initiative is already having a significant impact on the way PBUCC carries out its mission.

While the Pension Boards has always understood and affirmed its role as an Affiliated Ministry of the United Church of Christ, the faith and finance initiative now places the witness of faith front and center as our chief organizational and operational principle.

The Pension Boards' witness of faith is sustainable investment – defined as the double bottom line of doing good for creation and doing well for our members and stakeholders. Our renewed emphasis, supported by specific, achievable action plans, brings the

witness of faith – embodied in sustainability of the planet, human rights, ministry, and communities of faith – into intersection with products, programs, and services that address the needs of current and potential members through a focus on their financial and physical well-being.

I encourage you to access recent postings on our website describing our ongoing work in faith and finance, including a summary of the recent Faith and Finance Advisory Group retreat (http://bit.ly/PB_FFGroup08-2016); reflections by Trustee Geneva Butz on the theme of "Intersections" (http://bit.ly/PB_GMB); and the Policy Statement on Faith and Finance (http://bit.ly/PB_FFPolicy). And, as always, please feel free to contact me at rwalters@pbucc.org or by phone at 1.800.642.6543, ext. 2760.

God's Love Colors Everything

Rev. Krista L. Betz, Director, Ministerial Assistance

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund is a Special Mission Offering of the United Church of Christ that supports and honors those who have served and continue to serve in lay and authorized ministries of the United Church of Christ.

One of the unique aspects of the Christmas Fund is that the funds provide direct financial assistance to individual UCC clergy and lay church employees – the funds do not support programs or institutions, but people. During 2015, you provided gifts totaling \$1,528,481. Thank You! Because of your generosity, we were able to assist hundreds of UCC servants through the vital ministries of Small Annuity Supplementation, Health Premium Supplementation, Emergency Grants, and Christmas “Thank You” checks.

The theme of the 2016 offering is “God’s Love Colors Everything.” Playing up the current interest in coloring books, the image this year is a coloring page. A simple coloring book that tells the nativity story will also be made available online.

This year’s Advent worship resources were developed by Sharon R. Fennema, Assistant Professor of Christian Worship and Director of Worship Life, and a group of seminary students at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California. Worship and promotional resources are available at www.christmasfund.org.



Next Generation Leadership Initiative Announces Class of 2027

The Next Generation Leadership Initiative (NGLI) is a program that equips, energizes, and empowers younger UCC local church pastors to build up vibrant congregations that change lives and further God’s mission in the world.

NGLI seeks to honor and challenge young clergy who demonstrate significant potential, who have accepted the high calling to parish ministry, who view parish ministry as a vocational path, and who are willing to make a long-term commitment to service in congregational settings of the United Church of Christ.

have the opportunity to create a cohort of colleagues in which they can encourage, challenge, and reflect together on the life of a local church pastor in the twenty-first century. The NGLI program is highly competitive, with only about half of the applicants offered places in each year’s class.

The 14 pastors chosen to enter the Class of 2027 will begin their journey in January 2017. They join 99 other exceptional clergy who are participants in the previous six classes.



NGLI provides 10 years of learning experiences for each participant as they hone their strengths in order to lead the Church boldly into God’s future. Participants also

Congratulations to the members of the Class of 2027:

John Allen, Milton, Massachusetts; **Raygan Baker**, Evansville, Indiana; **Ryan Dowell Baum**, Sioux City, Iowa; **Juli Bertalan**, Millbury, Ohio; **Julia Burkey**, Middletown, Connecticut; **Daniel Cooperrider**, Weybridge, Vermont; **Rebecca Floyd Marshall**, Little Compton, Rhode Island; **Brian Gruhn**, Kittery Point, Maine; **Topher Mehlhoff**, St. Germain, Wisconsin; **Leslie Moughty**, Brainerd, Minnesota; **Dan Stark**, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; **Jennifer Wilder**, Temple Hills, Maryland; **Michelle Wilkey**, Kettering, Ohio; **Adam Wirrig**, Dayton, Ohio

Minimize Your Computer Security Risk!

Thomas Nolan, Chief Information Officer



Communicating, shopping, banking, and keeping track of your pension are far easier today than they were a few short years ago, but these activities come with some very real risks if you

are not careful. Identity theft, stolen passwords, and access to credit and banking information by criminals happen all too often.

There are numerous ways to protect yourself from the latest threats like “phishing,” malware, virus attacks, bogus emails, and “ransomware.” For more

information on how to minimize your computer security risk, visit the Pension Boards’ website at www.pbucc.org, and click on **Technology Resources and Discounts** in the navigation menu on the left side of the home page and click on **Secure Computing** on the left navigation menu.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Frank Loiacono, Director, Health Plan Operations

Health Plan Enhancements for 2017

Effective January 1, 2017, the UCC Health Plan will expand its eligibility guidelines to include health coverage for opposite-gender domestic partners. The Plan will continue to offer coverage for same-gender domestic partners. New application forms are available at www.pbucc.org.



Also, effective January 1, the Non-Medicare Plan will provide access to behavioral health and substance use disorder services through Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield. Highmark will replace Value/Beacon Health Options as a vendor partner. Network providers may be found online at www.highmarkbcbs.com or by calling Highmark Member Services at 1.866.763.9471. New medical identification cards will be issued in December.

2017 Health Plan Rates

For the 2017 Plan Year, the Non-Medicare Plan will experience a rate increase of 9%. There are no changes to deductibles and pharmacy copays. This rate action reflects

the increased use of medical services by our members, and the increased cost of medical care, including increased costs associated with specialty medications. Individual contribution rates will vary, depending upon changes to tier and/or age bands as of January 1, 2017. Rates for the Dental and Vision Plan will remain unchanged from 2016 levels.

Healthy Stewards 2016



Don't miss out on a chance to earn cash for keeping up with your health! UCC Non-Medicare Health Plan participants and their covered spouses/partners are eligible to earn up to \$300 each for completing an online health questionnaire, a health screening, and setting a health goal. The last day to order a health screening option will be November 15, 2016. Log in at www.highmarkbcbs.com and click **Rewards Program** to get started!

Influenza Immunizations

Flu season is upon us. The UCC Health Plan covers the flu vaccine for participants as a preventive no-cost benefit. For questions regarding the need for the vaccination on an individual basis, please contact your physician and/or primary care provider.



Upcoming Webinars

Wednesday, November 9
EYFPS Webinar - How Can I Lower My Taxes?

Wednesday, December 7
EYFPS Webinar - Surviving Student Debt

EY webinars (for actively-contributing members of the Annuity Plan) are available at <https://pbucc.eyfpc.com>.



As Election Day Nears, Remember These Investing Fundamentals

The upcoming presidential election, like any changing of the guard at the White House, could cause volatility in the investment world. But there are ways to shield your retirement nest egg from any shifts in the political and economic winds. Just stay focused on these key principles of savvy, long-term investing:

Stay focused on asset allocation

Always maintain an asset allocation that reflects your overall tolerance for risk and the fact that you'll need your retirement assets from the day you retire through the rest of your life.

Stay diversified

Stay invested in a variety of assets. Such diversification can reduce the impact that a loss on any one asset class, such as large-cap U.S. stocks, could have on your portfolio overall.

Avoid trying to time the market

In the grand scheme of things, the transition to a new presidential administration is a short-term blip in American history. Don't let any related volatility in financial markets keep you from staying the course in pursuit of your long-term goals.

To learn more, visit the EY Financial Planning Center® at <https://pbucc.eyfpc.com> or contact an EY financial planner at 1.877.927.1047.



Church Relations

Look for Us!

PBUCC representatives will be at the following UCC National and Conference events later this year:

November 29-December 3
MESA AM21 Meeting

We look forward to seeing you!

Are you looking for keynote speakers, workshop facilitators, or other presenters for an upcoming Conference or wider Church event? The Pension Boards can help! Visit our Speakers Bureau at http://bit.ly/PB_Speakers or contact the Rev. Martha M. Cruz, Communications and Church Relations Officer, toll-free at 1.800.642.6543, ext. 2740 or by e-mail at mcruz@pbucc.org.