

Money Matters

ILLINOIS CONFERENCE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Friday, August 20, 2021

DISASTER
MINISTRIES



UCC issues \$100,000 appeal for Haiti after 7.2 earthquake & tropical storm.
[Read the Full Appeal and Donate.](#)

UCC Pension Boards Minister's Financial Vitality Initiative

The Rev. Sarah A. Lohrbach

Securing the Future

Financial Justice for Ministers



At the 2021 General Synod, the United Church of Christ Pension Boards launched “**Securing the Future: Financial Justice for Ministers**”—a campaign to raise \$3 million to expand the **Ministers’ Financial Vitality Initiative (MFVI)**, a Pension Boards program that I have been blessed to be part of for the last three years. The MFVI program was designed by the Pension Boards to help address the clergy debt crisis and it has changed the lives of countless UCC authorized ministers across the country. Mine included.

Over the course of three years, I have received \$10,000 to help pay down my debt and begin to build up my savings. But this money is just one part of the program and was not even the main reason I applied. I used to have a bad relationship with money for various reasons: debt from previous relationships, high balances on credit cards from simply trying to make ends meet, debt from college, debt from seminary, and the list goes on. I had nothing in savings. Most of my credit cards were nearly maxed out. I had no cushion. No safety net. Just debt upon debt upon debt. Something needed to change, and I didn’t know where to start. **That’s where MFVI came in.**

“Seminary and consumer debt, often on limited income—especially for those serving small congregations—and a lack of resources to plan a secure financial future, are deepening a crisis for those called to serve. And the crisis is affecting our servant leaders of all ages.”

Brian R. Bodager, President, Pension Boards-United Church of Christ

During the three years of this program, I received individual financial coaching which helped me better understand my financial situation and then change it. We were given an article about different financial topics to read and webinars to attend each month. And then we shared and talked about our learnings as a cohort in a private group on Facebook.

I still have a long way to go to be where I want to be in the long run. I have student loan debt I need to pay off. I want to own a home one day. I want to become debt free. But I'm also a long way from where I started. In three years, **I cut my debt by more than 60%** and within the next year I am on track to be completely free of credit card debt. This is no small feat! I have raised my credit score by nearly 100 points and now have an excellent credit rating. I have begun to build up my savings and know I have a cushion if something happens. I know I would not be where I am today without the help of the Pension Boards and the MFVI program. ***It truly changed my life.***

I am grateful for the Pension Boards and their commitment to addressing the clergy debt crisis in truly meaningful and impactful ways. If you are clergy and want help with your financial wellbeing - I encourage you to apply! If you have the ability to support this program financially, please donate! I promise you that your gift will make a lasting impact for UCC ministers.

*With Deep Gratitude,
Rev. Sarah Lohrbach*



Learn More About MFVI

Watch the video to see the UCC Pension Boards presentation to the recent General Synod.

If you would like to learn more about the program or apply to be part of a future cohort you can contact Rev. Jonathan B. Lee, Philanthropy Officer for the Pension Boards at (800) 642-6543 x2718 or click the link below.

[Pension Boards MFVI Information](#)

Donate to MFVI Online

Click the button below and indicate "MFVI" as the Special Designation.

[Donate to MFVI Online](#)

Donate to MFVI by Check

Checks should be made payable to "Securing the Future: MFVI" and mailed to:
United Church of Christ
Financial Services
700 Prospect Ave, 6th Floor
Cleveland, OH 44115

And we Celebrate!!!

Taking Time for Self-Care

*"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest." - Matthew 11:28*

Are you taking care of you?! We all need to do that, especially these days. Matt Martinkus went to Tower Hill last week to provide Tracy Heilman an opportunity for time off as we wind down from a crazy busy summer season full of unexpected joys and challenges. Outdoor Ministries staff models how we work better, and are **STRONGER together!**





Support the work of the
Illinois Conference
with your gifts today!

Who we are

The Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ is made up of all of the churches, members, clergy and covenant partners affiliated with the United Church of Christ in the northern half of Illinois.

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