

# 2021 Capital Campaign: **Inspired to Serve God**

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## United Church of Christ in New York **Next Generation Initiative**

### UCC Pension Boards' **Generations of Service: Faith and Finance in Action**

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## A Word About Our Present Circumstance

Dear Friend,

**The guiding purpose of the *Inspired to Serve God* campaign has been dramatically reinforced by the current pandemic and yet, even greater, more immediate needs have emerged. We estimate that 20-40 percent of UCC congregations in New York are at risk of not surviving this crisis because of financial stresses.**

Because the Gospel of Jesus Christ is needed at times such as these as never before; because the witness of the United Church of Christ for justice, compassion, and a caring for the poor and disenfranchised communities is our bedrock belief; we envision adjusting our campaign to address the needs of the moment as well as what is needed for the next generation. Extraordinary times call for an extraordinary response.

The Pension Boards and New York Conference are in agreement that all gifts from churches to the Capital Campaign made prior to September 1, 2021 will be made available in a zero percent loan program to assist New York congregations. This is an opportunity for churches to help churches. Individual donors may also choose to have their gifts be used for this program.

Up to 80 congregations may apply for \$15,000 to \$30,000 interest-free loans to be paid back within three years through regular monthly installments. Applications from congregations will be reviewed by a UCCNY/PBUCC Loan Committee that will assess the viability of the congregation. As these loan monies are paid back, they will be equally split with 50 percent creating the "Next Generation Fund" of the New York Conference and 50 percent supporting the "Generations of Service" campaign of the Pension Boards (UCBMA).

Gifts to the *Inspired to Serve God* campaign now will help in two urgent ways: supporting local congregations in financial need in the short-term, and ensuring the New York Conference and the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance are ready to support and empower churches and leaders in the future.

Thank you for your support,



David R Gaewski  
Conference Minister

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## Foreword

The New York Conference and the UCC's Pension Boards share a mission commitment to empower Christ's Church and the people who serve it and call it home. We have chosen to be partners in a shared capital campaign to ensure current and future generations of United Church of Christ disciples in New York and beyond have the vital resources they need to faithfully thrive and effectively serve.

Together, our *Inspired to Serve God* partnership seeks to raise a total of \$2,000,000 for the emerging needs of the church.

The NY Conference portion of the 2021 capital campaign, *The Next Generation Initiative*, seeks to establish the Next Generation Fund. This \$1,000,000 endowment will allow the Conference to be agile in responding effectively to pressing needs as they emerge over time. Most immediately, the Next Generation Fund will support much-needed communications programs and personnel.

For its part, the Pension Boards' goal is to raise \$1,000,000 to maintain and expand the vital assistance and leadership programs of its charitable arm, the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance. This effort is part of UCBMA's \$20 million *Generations of Service: Faith and Finance in Action* campaign, underway in recognition of the deepening need for healthy and fully-equipped leaders to serve our churches.

The \$2,000,000 *Inspired to Serve God* campaign is an affirmation that our churches and culture are changing, that we need to be fully-equipped to meet those new challenges, and when we work together – Conference and national setting – our impact and effectiveness are multiplied for the good of all. In the pages that follow, you'll learn of the particulars of the campaign, the purposes of the partnership, and the opportunity before us.



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## United Church of Christ in New York Next Generation Initiative Introduction



Rev. David R. Gaewski  
Conference Minister

The Emerging Church is here. There are so many stories to tell and never enough time to tell them all fully. Sometimes just a picture or quick video clip suffices to communicate what many carefully crafted words would yield. The United Church of Christ in New York is anxious to communicate the good news of the many ways that God is being manifested in our churches right now. A new church truly is emerging, just as it emerged for the generations upon whose legacy and faithfulness we stand today.

The *Next Generation Initiative* is a campaign to create a flexible fund that will bolster the emerging needs of local churches and the story of the United Church of Christ in New York. We know our critical need today:

21st century communication. We know that Facebook has become what the mimeograph was to previous generations. Our current goal is to “energize” our communication tools, increasing their efficacy in telling the story, by fully engaging the most cutting-edge communication platforms. In five years, ten years, we don’t have the crystal ball that can show us the emergent needs for that next generation. That is why the *Next Generation Initiative* is intentionally flexible so that as new needs of the church become apparent, we can redirect invested funds to respond.

The goal of the *Next Generation Initiative* is to create the endowed Next Generation Fund, the interest from which will be used annually to respond to the changing and emerging needs of the local church and public witness of the whole church. Together with the UCC Pension Boards’ *Generations of Service* campaign, the New York Conference joins our *Next Generation Initiative* campaign to build upon our firm foundation and ensure our faithful, bold, and dynamic future.

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## United Church of Christ in New York Next Generation Initiative **Supporting Always-New Ministry Priorities:**

### **A Minister for Communications and Digital Strategies**

The initial use of the Next Generations Fund will be to support a conference staff position for communications. It is critical that the New York Conference have a dedicated position for enhanced communication strategies. We learned, for example, that a 30 second video filmed with a cell phone in a San Antonio hotel room about an incident back in New York was exactly what New York church pastors needed to hear. It was posted on Facebook and became one of several UCCNY posts that was shared widely. It wasn't planned, however, it communicated exactly the right message at exactly the right time. Moving forward, we need to ask ourselves daily, "What needs to be communicated right now?" To share what God shows us when we ask that question, we'll need to:

- create designated text groups focused on particular topics of interest
- send out notifications of breaking events in New York that are relevant to clergy and churches
- create short videos of best worship practices taking place in UCC churches
- develop podcasts on topics where faith intersects with current events
- livestream the work of local churches
- develop online communities in which both laity and clergy who share particular interests and passions are connected
- develop databases of persons with skills to share and of communities with similar faith-based priorities
- expand online education and community through the NY School of Ministry

### **The Future Won't Wait**

While we know effective communication is the urgent need of this moment for the NY Conference, what a relevant, engaging and vital ministry will demand in future years has yet to be revealed. The creation of the Next Generation Fund will allow the United Church of Christ in New York to be nimble and responsive when needs and opportunities emerge — whatever they may be.

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## UCC Pension Boards' Generations of Service: Faith and Finance in Action



Brian R. Bodager, PBUCB President & CEO

For more than a century, the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance (UCBMA) has served the needs of active and retired authorized ministers and lay church workers and their families. As the charitable arm of the Pension Boards, UCBMA provides direct financial assistance to those in need, sustainable ministry and leadership initiatives for leaders throughout their pastoral careers, and programs promoting personal financial management and debt reduction. The *Generations of Service: Faith and Finance in Action* campaign is underway to ensure these life-changing programs will be available to those who need them.

As church life changes, UCBMA is working to meet the needs of all those who serve!

- The clergy population is aging, and the number of retirees over the next decade will grow by a third. Many of these new retirees will not have enjoyed full and regular contributions to a pension, and health insurance costs will be too great. As the primary denominational provider of financial assistance programs, UCBMA ensures the dignity of church workers in retirement, as well as meets the urgent needs of those actively serving.
- Our congregations are facing new challenges: declining financial resources, large buildings built for a time of far larger memberships, shifting cultural and community priorities, and fewer hands — lay and ordained — to live out the mission. These challenges impact our pastors, and so UCBMA responds with programs providing clergy with the skills they need to be transformational, adaptive leaders, as well as to stay healthy and care for themselves and their families.
- One of the most significant stressors for pastors in the United Church of Christ is personal finance, often resulting from the combination of modest compensation and the weight of seminary debt. UCBMA provides young and not-so-young pastors with programs that teach personal financial skills and with grants to reduce educational and consumer debt.

The United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance leads the way in providing those who serve our churches with the resources and skills they need to lead effectively and live with dignity. The needs of those who serve are deepening dramatically. To ensure the resources will continue to be there for all, the *Generations of Service: Faith and Finance in Action* campaign aims to raise \$20 million to sustain and expand our programs of financial assistance, leadership development, and financial wholeness.



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## UCC Pension Boards' Generations of Service: Faith and Finance in Action

Gifts to the *Generations of Service: Faith and Finance in Action* portion of the *Inspired to Serve God* campaign will expand and sustain the essential programs of the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance.

### Sustainable Ministry & Leadership Initiatives



The **Next Generation Leadership Initiative** (NGLI) is designed for UCC pastors under the age of 35 who are committed to local church ministry. Each year a cohort of 15 is accepted into the six-year program, which focuses on building skills for transformational leadership. Building on the foundation of seminary training, participants learn additional skills and capacities that changing churches need: organizational dynamics, communications and outreach strategies, family systems theory, and building community relationships. The *Generations of Service* campaign will extend NGLI for another decade, empowering 150 young and committed local church pastors.

**CREDO** is an intensive wellness seminar designed for mid-career clergy between the ages of 38 and 58. By providing an opportunity for self-assessment among peers and a trained faculty, the program aims to strengthen pastoral leaders for the second half of their ministry and minimize the toll that effective ministry can sometimes take. Participants in the week-long seminar assess their wellness spiritually, physically, financially and vocationally, and develop a plan of action to address areas of need. CREDO pastors report feeling renewed in their ministry, reinvigorated for the work, and clearer about their pastoral strengths and how to use them. *Generations of Service* will allow 300 mid-career pastors to have the CREDO experience over the next decade.



“CREDO gave me practical tools (in body, mind, and spirit) to feel prepared for the next leg of my faith journey. I pray that every minister will get the opportunity to experience CREDO.”

*Rev. Todd Farnsworth; Pastor, Briarcliff Congregational – UCC, Briarcliff Manor, NY*



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## UCC Pension Boards' Generations of Service: Faith and Finance in Action

### Direct Financial Assistance



For decades, the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance has provided **direct financial assistance** to retired and active pastors and lay church workers and their families. In 2018, \$2.8 million was distributed across the denomination, with recipients in every Conference. Some programs are for retirees, particularly pension and health insurance supplementation; others meet the emergency needs of active church workers, underwrite benefits for new church start pastors, or provide monthly grants to those on disability — among others. Half the \$20 million goal of *Generations of Service* will ensure that funds will be available over the next 10 years to meet increased needs for this vital support.

### Financial Wellness Programs



In 2017, recognizing the need for personal financial management among pastors, as well as the weight of seminary debt for many, UCBMA launched the **Ministers Financial Vitality Initiative** (MFVI). MFVI has an educational component: 30 pastors (many from the UCC's Historically Underrepresented Groups) comprise a cohort that commits to a three-year program of personal financial training that focuses on budgeting, saving, planning and managing student and consumer debt. The debt reduction component of MFVI is based on a program of matching grants between UCBMA and the local congregation to defray the cost of its pastor's seminary debt. *Generations of Service* will make MFVI available to an additional two cohorts, or 60 additional pastors per year for ten years.



*PBUCC Pension Counselor Anna Blandino leads a workshop on saving for retirement.*



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## How to Make a Gift

The New York Conference and the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance are working together to meet the evolving needs of a changing church. Your gift to this joint campaign will impact church workers and the congregations they lead – meeting needs as we understand and respond to them now, and as those needs change or deepen as circumstances are revealed.

- A PDF of the Campaign pledge form can be downloaded here: <http://www.uccny.org/assets/Pledge-Form-1-27-21.pdf>
- Checks, made out to “New York Conference,” may be sent to the New York Conference office at P.O. Box 487, Syracuse, NY 13219-0487.
- You may give online at <http://bit.ly/NGI-GOS>.

On the Capital Campaign line, indicate the amount of your gift then write “Inspired to Serve God Campaign” in the description box. (See red highlighted section, below.) Questions about online giving should be directed to Lisa Delgado at [ldelgado@uccny.org](mailto:ldelgado@uccny.org).

**New York Conference**  
United Church of Christ

Serving our Congregations across New York State

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
New York Conference

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- The *Inspired to Serve God* Campaign welcomes planned gifts in support of this mission. For information on estate bequests, charitable gift annuities, and beneficiary designations, please contact the Rev. Dr. Jonathan B. Lee, Pension Boards Philanthropy Officer, at [jlee@pbucc.org](mailto:jlee@pbucc.org) or (800) 642-6543 x2718.
- For information regarding wire transfer of cash donations or stock, please contact David Losito at [dlosito@uccny.org](mailto:dlosito@uccny.org).



*Thank you for your support.*

