

August 14, 2022

Tenth Sunday After Pentecost

Psalm 80:1-2, 8-19

Restore Us

In today's psalm, God's people are envisioned as a vine, planted and carefully tended by God. How might we participate with God in being planters and tenders of the church and its leaders?

Last winter, UCC President John Dorhauer and Pension Board President and CEO Brian Bodager encouraged church members to be vine tenders, as they described one of the crises facing church leadership.

“Seminary and educational debt, the debilitating nature of limited income and the uncertainty of a secure financial future represent a deepening crisis for many pastors in the United Church of Christ,” they wrote in a joint letter. The Ministers' Financial Vitality Initiative (MFVI) is a program to help ministers address this problem with practical tools. Participants in the program receive financial gifts of \$9000 for debt reduction, \$1000 to seed a retirement account and the support of a cohort of fellow pastors and financial experts.

The Ministers' Financial Vitality Initiative strengthens ministry in the UCC by:

- increasing and enhancing financial literacy among UCC authorized ministers, with a particular emphasis on ministers from historically underrepresented groups within the denomination;
- assisting UCC ministers and their Ministry settings, Associations, Conferences, and the National Setting of the Church in “breaking the conspiracy of silence” that exists around pastoral finances;
- providing financial assistance to UCC authorized ministers toward repayment of educational and personal debt as well as seeding of pension funds;
- engaging key lay leaders in UCC churches in collaborative efforts to identify and address the connection between pastoral financial challenges and ministry setting financial challenges; and;
- launching a major fundraising campaign to solicit major gifts that will enable the long-term sustainability, and continued expansion of the program

You can be a vine-tender along with God, planting and nurturing growth. One way is to support the MFVI with your gift at pbucc.org.