

**REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE  
E-NEWSLETTER  
August 2009**

**"News from the Board of Pensions"**

*Note: This newsletter offers highlights and news from the Board of Pension. Please feel free to share this piece with your communications director or webmaster.*

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*Stewardship of Self Wellness Tip:*

***Know your family's medical history. While fitness and a good diet are significant in helping us stay healthy and live longer, scientists say our genetic traits and inheritance also determine our health and longevity. When you know your family's medical history, you can take proactive steps to lower your specific health risks. The [Mayo Clinic EmbodyHealth Web site](#) offers expert advice on how to achieve good health.***

**2009 Midyear Investment Review Now Available**

The [2009 Midyear Investment Review](#) of the Board of Pensions Balanced Investment Portfolio is now available. Entitled "Honey, I Shrank the Economy," the review provides insight into today's market conditions, examines investment results for periods ended June 30, 2009, and provides commentary on both the short- and long-term investment horizons and our long-term objectives.

**2010 Middle Governing Body Grants Applications Deadline is August 15**

Applications for Middle Governing Body Grants are due no later than August 15, 2009. Ten Middle Governing Body Grants in amounts up to \$15,000 are available for 2010, and must be matched by the middle governing body's financial contribution.

Middle Governing Body Grants may be used to fund practical skills training for pastors who are members of the Benefits Plan and currently serving a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregation. Eligible expenses must be directly related to practical skills education in the areas of congregational and staff leadership, budgeting and financial management, strategic planning, and conflict resolution.

For more information about these grants, visit [Pensions.org](#). The Web site provides the application, as well as program samples and contact information.

## **Giving to Assistance Program Easier than Ever**

The Board of Pensions offers a new secure [online contribution site](#) that makes it easier than ever to give to the Assistance Program. The online form allows a donor to designate his/her gift to support a particular part of the program and to contribute in honor or in memory of a loved one. The site also provides an instant confirmation of the contribution and will send a confirmation email for the donor's records.

## **Transition-to-College Assistance Grants Applications Being Accepted**

Transition-to-College Assistance Grants applications for students who are freshmen in the 2009 to 2010 academic year are being accepted through June 30, 2010. This pilot program helps mitigate transitional expenses, such as the purchase of computers and dorm room furnishings, for eligible families.

To review the program details, eligibility guidelines, and application procedures, please visit [Pensions.org](#).

## **Summer *EducationTalk* Published to Pensions.org**

The [Summer 2009 issue of \*EducationTalk\*](#) is now available on Pensions.org. This issue encompasses all four aspects of [Stewardship of Self](#): spiritual, vocational, financial, and health. In addition to reviewing the Medical Plan modifications made as a result of the June Board of Directors meeting, it includes articles about caring for our communities in tough times, your Annual Statement of Benefits, how to safeguard your identity, what to keep in your emergency kit, 2009 skin cancer facts, and much more.

## **Calling All Members: Submit Your Wellness Success Stories and Statements**

Have you taken advantage of one of the wellness programs offered through the Benefits Plan or the Assistance Program or engaged in other healthy behaviors that have improved your well-being? If so, we'd like to hear from you.

The [Stewardship of Self](#) section of Pensions.org features two sections that highlight success stories and wellness statements from members. In the [Share Your Story](#) section, members share experiences they've had using the wellness program and the Assistance Program. In the [Personal Wellness Statements](#) section, members share quick tips for how they have engaged in Stewardship of Self.

If you have a story or tip to share, please contact us through our easy-to-use online [contact form](#). It is one way you can reach out to and inspire the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) community.

## **Benefits Connect: Secure Online Access to Benefits Information**

[Benefits Connect](#) is a secure Web site available on Pensions.org that provides active and retired Plan members and surviving spouses with access to their personal benefits information. These members can submit changes to their contact information and dependent status, as well as use online calculators to estimate pension and death benefits.

If you are an active or retired member or a surviving spouse and have not yet registered for this secure, easy-to-use site, you can do so by visiting the Pensions.org homepage and clicking on "[Register](#)" under the Benefits Connect heading.

**As your Regional Representative** I am available to assist those in your presbytery who are in any way related to the work of the Board of Pensions, by offering:

- Retiree Luncheons,
- Church Treasurers Workshops
- Clergy Terms of Call seminars
- CPM Consultations, and
- Benefits Overview Workshops for Presbytery Leadership Events and for those congregations that have several staff members enrolled in the Benefits Plan.

Generally many of these workshops and presentations could be done in one hour or so, and may well save hours in the years to come. Let me know if you would like me to hold such an event or workshop in your presbytery.

### **Thought for the day:**

“If, the only prayer you say in your entire life is ‘Thank you,’ that would suffice.”

- Meister Eckhart, in *Looking for God in All the Right Places*, 67

*Helen Locklear*

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