

ANNUAL
STEWARDSHIP
REPORT

OUR STORY

GRATITUDE IN ACTION

1341

THE ENDOWMENT BOARD

FY2024/2025



Gratitude in Action

CONFERENCE CLAIMANTS'

ENDOWMENT BOARD

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Gratitude in Action



Over 130 years ago, a group of faithful laypeople saw a need and responded with compassion. They asked a simple but profound question, “What happens to our clergy when their days of active ministry are done?” They knew that a lifetime of service, though rich in spirit, often comes with financial retirement concerns. And so, they acted. From that deep well of care, the Laymen’s Relief Association was born and what we now know as the Conference Claimants’ Endowment Board.

What began as a mission to provide housing and pension support has grown into something even more beautiful – a ministry of presence, care, and accompaniment. Today, we continue to walk alongside the retired clergy and spouses of the California-Nevada Annual Conference, not just with financial assistance, but with fellowship, community, and heartfelt gratitude.

Each step we take is only possible because of you...our supporters, donors, and friends. You’ve trusted us to be generous on your behalf, and we take that responsibility with both joy and humility. Our greatest blessing is being able to give and to keep walking this road with those who’ve given so much of themselves.

Thank you for being part of this sacred journey.

MEETING THE MOMENT

ANSWERING THE CALL OF RISING HEALTHCARE COSTS

On June 7th, the Board of Trustees unanimously approved a \$200,000 increase to the annual grant to the Conference Board of Pensions, raising this year's total gift to \$2.2 million.

Rising healthcare costs continue to place a significant burden on retirees across the country; a burden that our retired clergy and their spouses should not have to bear alone.

In faithful alignment with our mission, The Endowment Board is committed to responding to the evolving needs of the retired clergy. While many conferences are scaling back or eliminating benefits, the California-Nevada Conference is expanding theirs and this is only possible because of our donors' trust and support.

We remain deeply honored to serve as stewards of the funds we receive, ensuring that those who served others are not forgotten in retirement, but cared for with dignity, love, and tangible support.



Endowment Board President, Mary Popish, and Executive Director, Cory Parish, present the 2025 grants to the Conference Board of Pensions (\$2.2M) and the Retired Clergy Association (\$136,000) at Annual Conference Session on Friday, June 27th.

2024/25 **\$2.0M GRANTED TO THE CONFERENCE BOARD OF PENSIONS:**

\$2,000,000

FOR HEALTHCARE COST
ASSISTANCE FOR 471
RETIREES AND
SPOUSES

\$4,246

IN ANNUAL BENEFITS
PER PARTICIPANT



Retirees, spouses, and scholarship recipients gather for the Retired Clergy Association's biggest social event of the year – the annual luncheon. The event is made possible by The Endowment Board's annual grant

2024/25

\$136,000 TO THE RETIRED CLERGY ASSOCIATION:

Crisis assistance

The printing and distribution of the Days of Grace newsletter

Events that support social engagement, connectivity, and fellowship

Funding for continuing education

Per diems to attend various conference events (Annual Conference Session, Gathering of Spiritual Leaders)

Volunteers-in-Mission (VIM) Trip funding

Administrative fees vital to the leadership of the RCA

Serving over 800 retirees/spouses/surviving spouses



"I want to thank you for helping me pay my expenses to Annual Conference this past June! It was the first time I asked after six years, and your Board immediately sent me my reimbursement and the max I could have asked for! Therefore, my colleagues, I truly express my gratitude and do not want to go long without sending my thanks. I do not take this gift for granted! I was able to answer the bell in 52 conference years now: Praise be to God! I look forward to next year, Lord willing!"

Retired Clergy Annual Conference Session Per Diem Recipient

CONGRATULATIONS

TO THE 2025 RETIREES!

The 2025 retirees at Annual Conference Session.



Rev. Brandon Austin
Rev. Michael Bekstrom
Rev. Debra Brady
Rev. Angela Brown
Rev. Dirk Damonte
Rev. Donna Farrell
Rev. Laura Heffernan
Rev. Anthony Jenkins
Rev. Lee Neish
Rev. Judith Rene Robbins
Rev. Karen Stoffers-Pugh
Rev. Shine Vang



The 2025 retiree class was honored at The Endowment Board's inaugural "An Evening of Gratitude" dinner on Friday, June 27th.

If you would like to congratulate any of the 2025 retirees, consider making a tribute donation to the Wisdom in Scholarship and Education (WISE) Fund in their honor. Visit our website at EndowmentBoard.org to make a donation online or scan the QR code and make a note of the clergyperson you wish to honor in the comment box.



MISSION-IN-MISSION

Making Annual Conference More Accessible for Retirees

Navigating the Annual Conference Session often involves a lot of walking between sessions, meals, and gatherings. To help make the experience more comfortable and inclusive, The Endowment Board sponsored complimentary scooter rentals for all retirees and their spouses who wished to reserve one.

Scooters were delivered onsite and available throughout the weekend, ensuring that physical limitations didn't prevent anyone from participating fully in the event. Whether attending a worship service, joining a meal, or connecting with colleagues, retirees were able to move freely and comfortably.

The Endowment Board remains committed to removing barriers and supporting the well-being of retired clergy—because no one should have to miss out due to mobility challenges.

"...To provide electric scooters for our recent Annual Conference was so thoughtful...to give us such helpful information in Days of Grace about scams on the internet was very appreciated. And now to hear about the Shepherd Fund; what a relief to know that there might be help in an emergency. The Endowment Board has been there for our clergy families behind the scenes on numerous occasions over the years; we are so grateful; Roy Wilson would be so proud!"

Rev. Bill and Kate Johnson

\$5,000 Gathering of the Spiritual Leaders Sponsorship

In October 2024, The Endowment Board trustees approved a \$5,000 sponsorship for the 2025 Gathering of Spiritual Leaders (GOSL) with a dual purpose: to enhance programming for retired clergy and to foster relationships with active clergy.

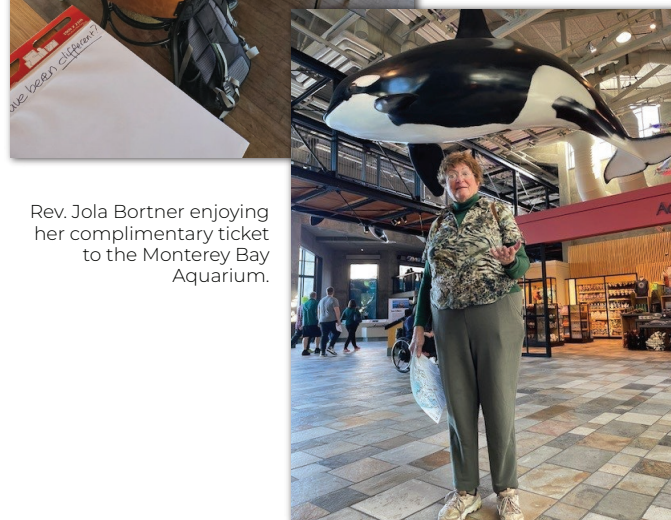
This year's sponsorship brought meaningful experiences to retired clergy attending the event by creating a nurturing environment to tend to their mental and spiritual well-being. Highlights included complimentary tickets to the Monterey Bay Aquarium, a sound bath experience, and support for the Bishop's reception at Bubba Gump's, where an Endowment Board banner was proudly displayed.

This sponsorship came in addition to the \$136,000 annual grant to the Retired Clergy Association, which funded per diems for over 40 retirees and their spouses to attend GOSL.

Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, reflecting the impact of these efforts in honoring retired clergy and deepening engagement across generations of spiritual leadership.



Retired clergy person and Endowment Board trustee, Rev. Jim Current, leads a small group session at GOSL.



Rev. Jola Bortner enjoying her complimentary ticket to the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Mission Outreach Luncheons

Boots on the Ground with our Retirees

The geographic expansiveness of our conference poses a challenge in developing deeper relationships with those we serve. With our mantra in mind, several Endowment Board staff and board members hosted two spirit-filled mission outreach luncheons to connect with retirees and spouses in different areas, one of which was for a group that resides outside the conference bounds at Pilgrim Place in Claremont, California. The second was held in Capitola for retirees who reside in the Santa Cruz and Monterey County regions. Both days were equally special, full of fellowship, organizational updates, and appreciation. The Endowment Board would like to thank all who joined them, especially Rev. Becky Goodwin, for coordinating the Pilgrim Place visit – thank you for walking with us!



Protecting our Retirees in the Digital Era: Lifetime Norton LifeLock Identity & Cyber Protection Coverage

Issue 3

Endowment Board 2024/2025

GRATITUDE NEWS

First Edition

Norton LifeLock Cyber & Identity Theft Protection



According to Norton LifeLock, there is a victim of identity theft in the U.S. every 3 seconds, and more than 63 million Americans (mostly aged 60+) have been affected by identity theft.

With these statistics in mind, the Board of Trustees approved funding for Norton LifeLock cyber and identity theft protection for the California-Nevada retirees and spouses, covering the cost in perpetuity to ensure their assets are protected in one of the most vulnerable times of their lives.

If you qualify for this new benefit, please contact Jenny Copello for enrollment instructions (209) 390-0989 or Jenny@endowbd.org.

"...This is a great opportunity, and an important benefit. We appreciate all who made it possible to offer Norton LifeLock to us retired pastors. Our thanks to everyone at The Endowment Board for your hard work and commitment."

– Rev. Virginia (Ginger) Foster

**Please note that the benefit is one per household, unless both spouses are clergy.*



Endowment Board staff members, Ms. Jenny Copello and Ms. Owen Dunham pose with The Spiritual Leaders (GOSL) chair, Rev. Dr. George Edd-Bennett, to promote The Endowment Board's complimentary Norton LifeLock protection benefit for retirees and spouses at the GOSL event.

GIFT DESIGNATION

WHERE DONOR VALUES MEET ACTION



SHEPHERD FUND



WISDOM IN
SCHOLARSHIP &
EDUCATION FUND



HEALTHCARE FUND



AREA OF
GREATEST NEED

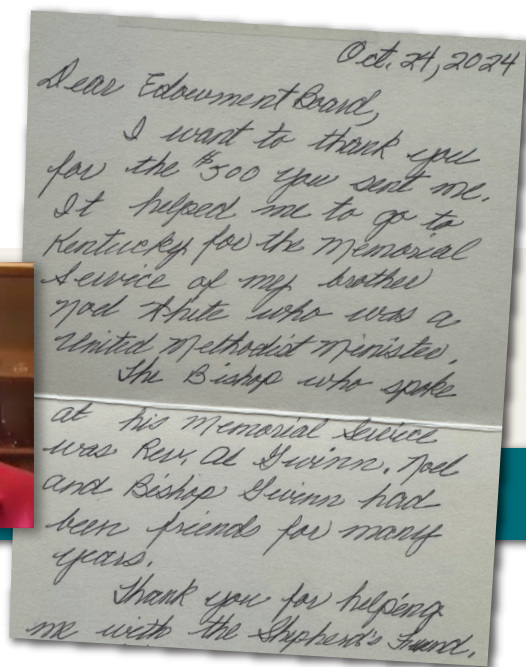
THE SHEPHERD FUND offsets costs for retired clergy and spouses in times of need. Asking for help can be difficult for those who have chosen a life of service and selflessness, but the hope is that those who qualify will see the fund as a blessing. The Shepherd Fund is confidentially administered by the Conference Board of Pensions office.

In 2024, numerous Shepherd Fund grants were issued to deserving individuals, totaling \$19,000. The funds were used to help offset costs for unexpected medical conditions, a cross-country move, travel to a loved one's funeral, end of life care, and caregiver respite care.

WISDOM IN SCHOLARSHIP & EDUCATION (WISE) FUND

On February 6th, 2025, The Endowment Board's Board of Trustees approved the launch of the Wisdom in Scholarship & Education (WISE) Fund - a new initiative dedicated to ensuring that all retired clergy have access to continuing education, fellowship opportunities, and other endeavors that would facilitate spiritual growth. The WISE Fund removes any potential financial obstacles for retirees to pursue meaningful studies, engage in spiritual exploration, and continue sharing their wisdom with their communities.

Mrs. Augusta Kidd,
2024 Shepherd
Fund Recipient



"I am beyond grateful that The Endowment Board established the WISE Fund to encourage and support retired clergy toward achieving growth goals. Pastors are lifelong learners by nature. Here's to hoping that many threads of curiosity and inspiration discovered but laid aside amidst the demands of active appointment may now be pursued and shared with colleagues, congregations, and the conference."

Rev. Mark Wharff, Retired Clergy and Endowment Board Trustee

THE HEALTHCARE FUND is used to help fund the \$2.2M annual grant to the Conference Board of Pensions. These funds help retirees cover the financial gap that emerges when Medicare falls short. Some of the funds are distributed via an HRA card that retirees and spouses can use to cover any medical expenses, including their Medicare Part B premiums.

THE AREA OF GREATEST NEED leaves the designation up to the discretion of The Endowment Board, and the highest priority at the time the gift is made.

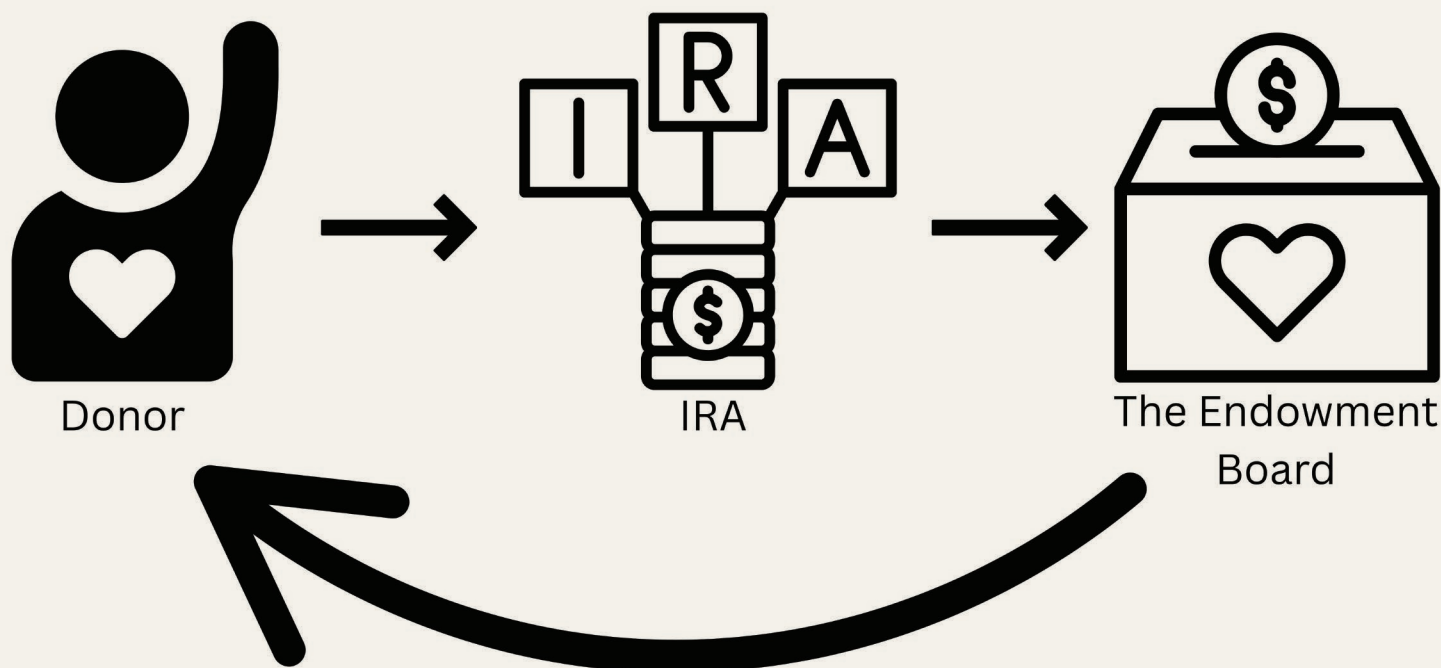
"Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can." - **John Wesley**

A SMART WAY TO GIVE

QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTIONS IN 2025

If you're age 70½ or older, there's a powerful tool available to support your charitable giving while also reducing your tax burden: the Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD).

With the increased standard deduction, fewer taxpayers itemize their deductions, meaning traditional charitable gifts may no longer reduce your taxable income. But QCDs offer a way around that.



Reduces taxable income, satisfies RMDs, no need to itemize deductions

What Is a QCD?

There is no minimum amount, a QCD allows you to make a tax-free donation directly from your traditional IRA to a qualified charity, such as The Endowment Board or your local church. This donation can count toward your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), which begins at age 73. For 2025, you can donate any amount up to \$108,000 through QCDs.

Tax Benefits:

- Reduces your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI), which can lower your overall tax liability.
- May reduce the taxable portion of your Social Security benefits.
- Helps avoid the “stealth taxes” triggered by higher AGI, such as increased Medicare premiums.

Most financial advisors are familiar with QCDs and can help you initiate the process. It's a simple, impactful way to support the causes you care about, while making the most of your retirement assets.

LEAVING A LEGACY

GRATITUDE IN ACTION

Legacy giving, also known as planned giving or deferred giving, allows you to achieve your personal, financial, and philanthropic goals, and make a larger gift to a charity than you could make from ordinary income. Common types of planned gifts include charitable bequests, IRA charitable rollovers, charitable remainder trusts, retirement assets, pooled income fund contributions, and blended gifts.

The Legacy of Mr. Edward T. Bernhoft



Mr. Edward Bernhoft, a devoted layperson in the California-Nevada Conference, deeply believed in the mission of The Endowment Board and wanted to ensure its continued support for retired clergy and their spouses. With just a single sentence in his will, he made a lasting impact—designating a \$10,000 gift to The Endowment Board as part of his estate plan. His daughter, Joyce, later requested that the funds be directed to the Shepherd Fund, honoring what she knew to be her father's heartfelt intention. We are profoundly grateful to be the beneficiaries of Mr. Bernhoft's simple yet powerful act of generosity...his Gratitude in Action.

The Endowment Board's Pooled Income Fund Income for Life with a Side of Philanthropy

The Endowment Board's Pooled Income Fund (PIF) is a separate charitable trust fund managed by estate planning attorneys at Hobson and Hobson. When people generously contribute to our PIF, they receive immediate tax and income benefits for life. The PIF works like this:

- Contributions are pooled with those of other donors and invested in our fund
- Income is paid quarterly based on interest in the fund
- Upon passing, the remaining funds will go to help further our mission

In 2024, our PIF participants received a 6.5% overall rate of return*

**Numbers vary depending on the performance of the fund.*

Before making a planned gift to us, we encourage you to consult with your legal, tax, estate planning, financial, or investment advisor to ensure that any gift you are considering aligns with your personal circumstances.

Upcoming Events & Happenings

OCTOBER 2025

VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION (VIM) TRIP

For the third time since October 2024, staff members of The Endowment Board and volunteers from the Retired Clergy Association will return to Camp Lodestar in Calaveras County to tackle long-overdue maintenance at the beloved United Methodist camp. Their dedication bore fruit in May, when Bishop Sandy hosted the first confirmation retreat at the camp since COVID-19. While much progress has been made, more work remains to restore Camp Lodestar to the vibrant, bustling place it once was.



MINISTER APPRECIATION MONTH (MAM)

October is "Minister Appreciation Month". In partnership with the California-Nevada Conference, we are encouraging tribute donations in honor of or in memory of your favorite pastor(s) as a small form of recognition for their sacrificial dedication to their calling. Whether your pastor is active or retired, consider making a gift in their honor or memory to The Endowment Board or your local church this October. This year, we're highlighting the heart of ministry through weekly videos with the voices of our Annual Conference. Stay tuned for some special stories and faces.



DECEMBER 2025

YEAR-END GIVING

For every tribute donation made in December, an ornament featuring a personalized message from the donor will be added to a beautifully decorated tree in the lobby of The Endowment Board. A special acknowledgment will be sent to the person or family designated by the donor, letting them know about the thoughtful gift made in their honor. This meaningful gesture is a wonderful way to share light and love with someone special while also fulfilling year-end philanthropic goals. Tribute letters will be mailed around Thanksgiving, so keep an eye out (and your heart open) for this opportunity to give.



MARCH/APRIL 2026

CANDY FOR EASTER = FUNDS FOR RETIREES AND SPOUSES ALL YEAR LONG!

Planning to order Easter candy for your kids, grandkids, or friends next year? You can visit The Endowment Board's See's Candies Easter storefront to order a classic Peanut Butter Egg, a Happy Bunny Box, or the traditional Chocolate Assortment box, to name a few! For each item purchased, a portion of the sale will be donated to The Endowment Board to benefit the WISE Fund. You may have the candy shipped to you or directly to the recipient. Don't miss out on this sweet opportunity to make someone's day with a delicious surprise! Look for the link to order on our website beginning March 1st, 2026.



JUNE 2026

2026 RETIRED CLERGY ASSOCIATION (RCA) LUNCHEON

If you are a retired clergy or spouse, mark your calendars for the 2026 Annual RCA Luncheon on June 25, 2026, at the SAFE Credit Union Convention Center. This is the social event of the season, and a wonderful opportunity for fellowship, business, and fun! The luncheon is made possible by our annual grant to the RCA.

WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT.



To make a gift, please use the enclosed form or scan this code with your mobile device to make an online donation at **EndowmentBoard.org**

The Heart Behind the Mission



Giles Popish and Norm Daley



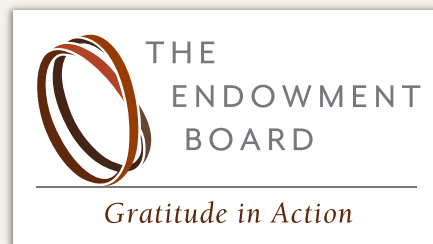
Mary Popish and Lara Boucher



Rev. Gary and Rev. Debbi Grundman, Rev. Mark and Laura Wharff, Rev. Kim Smith, and Mark Ramorino



Margie Gong and Rev. David Niu



2024/2025



Rev. Pam Abbey, Rev. Madi Elsea, Rev. Dave Bennett and Rod Lee



Ellen Cundiff and Nancy Daley



Siteri Maravou, Rev. Kim Smith, and Rev. Dirk Damonte



Rev. Kathryn Dunning and Cory Parish



THE
ENDOWMENT
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Gratitude in Action

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