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Your Support Can Help the Initiative Secure \$500K for Clergy of Color Well-Being

The Clergy Financial Well-Being Initiative (Initiative) is on the path to raise \$250,000 to reach a Lilly Endowment Inc. matching grant of \$250,000 by September 2023. To date, we have secured undesignated gifts of more than \$50,000 and invite you to consider joining our efforts to increase the well-being of United Methodist Clergy of Color by contributing today. Preliminary results of a recent survey by the Gammon Research Institute highlight how COVID-19 has impacted the well-being of Clergy of Color and identified needs, which the funds will seek to address. In addition, the funds will bolster our collaborative efforts to reduce clergy debt, increase financial literacy and address equity issues in our church systems.

[View the case statement.](#)

[Watch the video.](#)



Advisory Team Gathers at Wespeth for Planning Session



On February 28, the Initiative's new advisory team gathered at Wespath to review preliminary data from the survey administered through the Gammon Research Institute on how COVID-19 impacted the personal and professional lives of United Methodist Clergy of Color. The team also affirmed priorities and strategies to reach Initiative goals for the next two years. Later this spring, Gammon will schedule a public webinar on the survey's complete findings.



Well-Being for Clergy of Color in Illinois Great Rivers Conference

A recent grant funded a collaborative partnership between the Initiative, General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA), and the Illinois Great Rivers Conference (IGRC) to support a well-being retreat for clergy of color serving cross-racial/cross-cultural (CR/CC) appointments made between 2019 and 2022.

Fifteen clergy, including three clergy couples, representing 24 churches, gathered for a two-and-a-half day retreat at the Cedar Creek Retreat Center in New Haven, Missouri. Based on Wespath's [five dimensions of well-being](#), clergy participated in sessions to improve their social, emotional, spiritual, physical and financial well-being. Rev. Dr. Jacqui King, IGRC's Director of Ministerial Excellence, identified the need for this clergy population in her conference, and saw the opportunity to innovate in partnership with GCFA. Dr. King worked with the district superintendents to identify clergy in every district to help increase ongoing participation from CR/CC pastors in developing new covenant groups.



April is Financial Literacy Month—Saving Grace is the Perfect Tool for Your Congregation



Consider offering Saving Grace with your constituents to raise awareness of Financial Literacy Month. Any time is a great time to encourage your community to improve financial well-being. Last year, one participant from a Wespath-led Saving Grace course offered this feedback: "Very practical information to put into action. Fantastic materials in Saving Grace to use for a lifetime." [Click here to read](#)

[more about the program, or to purchase the educational curriculum from Cokesbury.com.](#)

UMC Clergy Financial Well-Being Initiative

For more information about this initiative and clergy financial well-being resources, visit:
<https://www.wespath.org/for-plan-sponsors/UMC-clergy-financial-well-being>

Successfully expanding financial literacy depends on strategic collaboration.
We look forward to working with you in 2023.

Connected in Christian Service,

Dale Jones, *Wespath Project Director*
David Bell, *Project Chair*

Bonnie Marden, *Project Manager*

A collaborative project led by Wespath Benefits and Investments, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Discipleship Ministries and National Association of United Methodist Foundations funded by a Lilly Endowment Inc. grant through their Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Pastoral Leaders.



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