



# CCP Update



**Wespath**  
BENEFITS | INVESTMENTS

July 2023

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## Want to Learn More About the CCP Program?

The 2022 biennial report on the CCP program is available at [wespath.org/ccp](https://wespath.org/ccp) in English, French and Portuguese and provides insights into the pension plans around the world for which CCP provides funds.

## Wespath General Secretary Deeply Moved by First Visit to Zimbabwe and Mozambique Annual Conferences



*General Secretary Andy Hendren visits with pensioners including (left to right) the late Rev. Enosse Litiho, surviving spouse Diana Phiri, and surviving spouse Claudina Mahumane.*

Throughout his many roles during his 19 years at Wespath, General Secretary Andrew (Andy) Hendren's work has supported Wespath in its mission to "care for those who serve." He was honored to have the recent opportunity to travel to Mozambique and Zimbabwe to learn more about the context of The United Methodist Church (UMC) in Africa, and how we care for those globally through the Central Conference Pensions (CCP) program.

"It was important to me that I hear directly from the pensioners what the UMC, Wespath and the CCP program means to them," said Hendren. "I knew that, if I spoke to these individuals and their families face-to-face and experienced where and how they live, I could better understand their needs and how the CCP program might be improved to address those needs."

In June, Hendren and Thomas Kemper, a consultant for the CCP program, spent two weeks in Zimbabwe and Mozambique meeting with pension recipients, including retired pastors, surviving spouses and their families. There, they learned how clergy and their families dedicate their life to ministry for little in return, with those serving in rural areas often having no salary and instead being paid in-kind with fresh produce and animal products.

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## CCP Financials as of 6/30/2023

**\$27,967,885**

Total donations received  
Inception to date

**\$85,309**

Donations received  
Year to date

**\$899,351**

Emergency grants  
2006–2012

**\$14,691,277**

Pension funds distributed  
(01/01/2007 to date)

**\$666,037**

Pension distributions  
Year to date

"I was certainly educated. Most of these people live in modest, multigenerational homes," reflected Hendren. "The pension they receive [once they retire] helps them build their homes and buy food, medication, and school supplies for their grandkids. It was incredibly moving to see how much the program improves their lives."

"Yet, even with what little they have, their lives are filled with joy. They trust in their community and God to take care of them," continued Hendren. "Everyone we visited was so hospitable, offering us snacks, stories and song. Even with a language barrier, we were able to communicate what mattered. It was a powerful experience."

Having acquired a new perspective, Hendren visualizes a bright future for the CCP program. "Retirement security is extremely meaningful to people in every place of the world, but how we support those who serve may vary depending on many factors, such as the economy in which they live," noted Hendren. "I think there are many opportunities for us to collaborate with partners, and I am confident that together we can expand the program's reach and touch people's lives in a significant way."

What follows are the stories of several pension recipients that Hendren and Kemper heard from firsthand.

#### Salida Natingue

According to her grandchildren, Salida Natingue is a living library. At 86, she continues to teach her four children, 15 grandchildren and one great grandchild good manners. Her late husband Gideon Jamella was a translator of the Methodist hymnbook into the Tswa (Xitswa) language. As a widow living with her daughter's family, Natingue expressed her gratitude for the CCP program's financial support.



#### Rev. Kaiboni Nkomo

Together with his wife Anni, Rev. Kaiboni Nkomo raised six children and 21 grandchildren. Now 81, Nkomo has accomplished a great deal during his years of service. As a pioneer of prison ministry, he was appointed the first chaplain general of the Zimbabwe prison service. He also started many new churches in the mining region of Zimbabwe, which have developed into ten circuits today. Thanks to the CCP program, Nkomo and his wife can help their daughter-in-law run a school of over 200 students on their compound in Harare.



#### Late Rev. Enosse Litiho

At 106, Rev. Enosse Litiho was the oldest member of the UMC in Mozambique, before he passed away in late June after his visit with Andy and Thomas. In the 1950s, he was sent to serve in migrant Mozambican mining communities in South Africa. When Hendren and Kemper visited him in his home near Cambine, Rev. Litiho said he was incredibly grateful for the CCP program because he loved to read, and the pension allowed him to pay for his prescription reading glasses and many books.



## Bishop Estrella Opens New Doors as First Female Bishop to Serve in Philippines

Bishop Estrella zealously devoted her whole life to the UMC and accomplished a great deal throughout her ministry, earning her the distinction of "first" in many roles prior to her election as Bishop, including:

- First and only woman district superintendent of the Philippines Annual Conference
- First-ever woman administrative pastor of the Central United Methodist Church in Manila.
- First clergyperson to be elected treasurer of the Philippines Central Conference.



Bishop Ruby-Nell M. Estrella (left) shares her story with Wespeth's Michelle Robinson (right) during her visit to the agency's campus.

In April, Wespeth welcomed all three recently elected bishops from the Philippines Central Conference to the agency's campus (just outside Chicago, Illinois). Bishop Estrella graciously dedicated time to speaking with Michelle Robinson, Church Relations Specialist, about how she navigates the trials and tribulations and thrilling new opportunities that come with being a female trailblazer for the Church.

**Q: How has the transition to the first female bishop in the Philippines Central Conference been for you and have you encountered any challenges?**

**A:** Before being elected bishop, I was first appointed as a pastor in the rural area. They have a strong resistance to women pastors—they argue it's written in the Bible and are accustomed to pastors

being male. It was even more difficult when I was appointed as first clergywoman district superintendent of Philippines Annual Conference. I was also very young then, and with just 11 years in ministry.

As a clergywoman you have to prove yourself and earn people's respect. So, for me, I just do my ministry with the grace and wisdom that comes from God. Now when I discuss issues with pastors who are my senior and male, they cooperate.

At first, I had no intention of pursuing episcopacy—it's a big responsibility and there is great resistance in electing a female bishop [in the Philippines], from both men and women, but the endorsement of my female supporters pushed me to go through with it. There is still opposition, but people have become more accepting.

**Q: Given the challenges you continue to face, what drives you to do your work and motivates you to be patient?**

**A:** I hold onto the idea that the Lord called me to this ministry, and so I give it everything I have. If I ever doubt my position as bishop, I tell myself that I didn't seek it, but rather it was meant to be, by God, and that gives me the strength to continue.

After my first [pastoral] appointment in a rural area, I went back to my home church because I didn't think becoming a pastor was for me. But after three years, I returned because the Lord called me again, and when the Lord calls, you answer. I knew there was no other path for me.

**Q: As the first female bishop, do you feel like your election will open doors for women to follow in your footsteps and pursue higher positions inside or outside of the Church?**

**A:** Yes, I do. The women's group is fighting for a place in the episcopal table and my election, no matter how difficult, opened the gate for other women clergy. The reason I was initially hesitant to enter my candidacy was because I saw other clergywomen who are more qualified than I am. But I know their time will come, and I hope it is soon.

**Q: Switching gears a bit, what do Wespath and the CCP program mean to you?**

**A:** I have always been very grateful for Wespath and the CCP program, but it wasn't until I was elected treasurer that I realized the extent of their impact and came to truly appreciate what you do for us. I value all the support Wespath provides—not just the financial support, but the moral and spiritual support as well.

## CCP Staff Talks Sustainability for Liberia's Pension Plan

Wespath's Ross Lundstrom (manager, Church Relations) and Thomas Kemper traveled to attend the 190th Liberia Annual Conference session. Rev. John Mulbah, a powerful preacher who served the Church until he became visually impaired in 2015, led the opening service.



Afterwards, Lundstrom and Kemper met with several retired pastors and surviving spouses to better understand their day-to-day lives and the Liberian pension distribution system. Pensions in Liberia are currently paid in cash, but recipients showed enthusiasm for the possibility of mobile banking.

Although Liberia's pension plan faces challenges regarding long-term funding, the visit has spurred discussion about possible changes to help make the plan more sustainable. In collaboration with the pension board and the newly formed Pension Sustainability Committee, Wespath hopes to explore alternative solutions and sustainable efforts for the plan.

## Visit to Sierra Leone Spurs Discussion on Plan Improvements

Following their visit to Liberia, Lundstrom and Kemper continued to Sierra Leone for the 143rd session of the Sierra Leone Annual Conference. Prior to the session, they met with the pension board to lay the groundwork for necessary changes to Sierra Leone's pension plan. Interim Bishop Brown expressed his ambitions to set forth on a path to sustainability and present the proposed plan changes at the 2024 annual conference.

The following day, Lundstrom and Kemper attended the annual conference session. They also participated in the Clergy and Laity sessions and visited the homes of pensioners in Freetown, giving clergy an opportunity to share their thoughts.











Wespath's CCP team plans to return to the annual conference in 2024 and in the meantime work with the pension board subcommittee to prepare the necessary plan revisions.












## Central Conference Facts:

The central conferences are located outside the United States and include annual conferences in Africa, the Philippines and Eurasia. Within the central conferences there are 79 provisional and annual conferences (of which 69 are assisted by CCP) with 5.4 million members.

## Statistics:

Country	Active clergy	Retirees receiving payments	Surviving spouses/beneficiaries receiving payments
Cote d'Ivoire 	249	3	35
Liberia 	1,161	216	544
Mozambique 	275	37	44
West Angola 	427	90	78
East Angola 	75	22	21
Sierra Leone 	80	20	18
Zimbabwe 	321	49	49
Russia 	54	25	0
Philippines 	1,601	226	214
Nigeria 	350	41	84

Country	Active clergy	Retirees receiving payments	Surviving spouses/beneficiaries receiving payments
East Africa 	836	188	162
East Congo 	413	86	84
Central Congo 	713	223	115
South Congo 	711	117	208
North Katanga 	537	272	249
South Africa 	8	3	2
Southern and Central Europe 	68	22	8
Lithuania 	2	0	0
Latvia 	11	2	0

### Total CCP Statistics

- Active pastors covered—**7,892**
- Retirees and Surviving spouses receiving support—**3,557**
- Total of all pension support funds released to date—**\$ 15,590,629\***

*\*Total of emergency grants and pension funds distributed*

### Questions?

#### Central Conference Pensions: Wespeth

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#### Central Conference Pensions

c/o Wespeth Benefits and Investments  
75 Remittance Drive, Suite 6714  
Chicago, IL 60675

Make checks payable to:  
Wespeth Benefits and Investments  
Add "CCP" on the "memo" line