



**Wespath**  
BENEFITS | INVESTMENTS  
December 2023

# CCP Update

## Consider Donating to CCP

Donation information  
is available on  
[wespath.org/ccp](https://wespath.org/ccp).

Thank you!

## 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.



(Left to right) Thomas Kemper, Reverend Paul Matheri (Dean of Superintendents of the United Methodist Church, Kenya) and Bill Kavanaugh

## CCP Forum Welcomes New Faces, Creates Space for Collaboration

In November, Wespath's Central Conference Pensions (CCP) team traveled to Nairobi, Kenya, to host the most highly attended United Methodist Central Conference Pension Forum in recent years. The four-day meeting welcomed nearly as many new attendees as returnees, hosting a range of representatives, including central conference benefits officers, treasurers, Board of Pensions members and chairs.

The opening worship, performed in multiple languages and recognizing many cultures, set the Forum's overarching theme of collaboration. Attendees participated in the spiritual coming together of pension leaders, treasurers and other key leaders from across the world singing and dancing in worship. From the beginning, this sense of connection instilled an openness to dialogues with differing perspectives between the Forum participants.

Wespath's CCP team presented alongside other experts on a mix of topics such as global trends for retirement plan offerings and how things are evolving, the comparison of pension plans and defined contribution plans, actuarial valuations, auditing programs and best practices for conference staff and boards. The priorities of the upcoming General Conference were also discussed. In addition, each pension plan's representatives had a chance to meet with Wespath staff to ask questions, share feedback and explore the specific needs of their plan.

The ongoing need for education about retirement plans, difficulty in collecting contributions, and importance of complete and accurate data were also addressed at the gathering. Attendees affirmed efforts to increase knowledge and awareness of the CCP program's features. Attendees were also assured of Wespath's steadfast support for the CCP program throughout a changing UMC.

Between sessions, attendees had time to dine together and engage in local recreation and camaraderie. Wespath staff and other Forum participants journeyed through a safari and visited a conservation center where they fed giraffes undergoing rehabilitation. "Most of us had never done something like this before," noted Wespath's Ross Lundstrom (manager, Church Relations). "It was incredible, and to share that experience as a group for the first time made it even more so."

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## CCP Financials as of 10/31/2023

**\$28,037,976**

Total donations received  
Inception to date

**\$155,650**

Donations received  
Year to date

**\$899,351**

Emergency grants  
2006–2012

**\$15,361,336**

Pension funds distributed  
(2007 to date)

**\$1,336,096**

Pension distributions  
Year to date

The Forum's concluding sermon emphasized the importance of making balanced choices and remaining resilient when faced with challenges, exemplified by the living testimonies of the CCP program's impact:

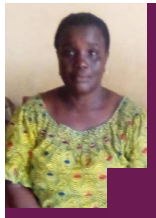
**Gertrude Ntamajo, 71 (Province of Gisuru, Burundi)**

Gertrude Ntamajo served as a pastor for nearly 30 years with a special focus on women and young girls at a church center established by missionaries. Now, with the support of her pension from Wespeth and the Burundi Annual Conference, she is able to employ local workers for her farm and provide them with livelihood opportunities. Her pension has also enabled her to build a three-bedroom house, which she shares with her daughter, grandchild and great-grandchild.



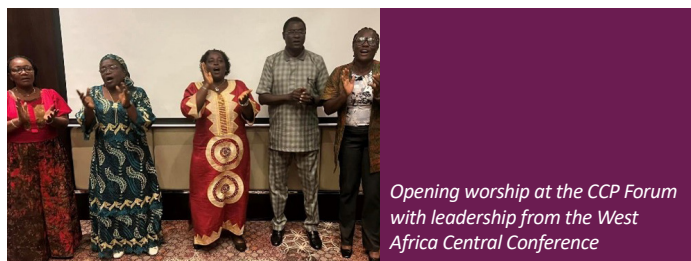
**Dagri Koliahon Virginia Epse Sonan, 57 (Côte d'Ivoire)**

After the loss of her husband, a dedicated UMC pastor, she transformed her grief into hope. Her son discovered a niche in sourcing girls t-shirts at an affordable price. The duo uses their modest pension not just as a means for sustenance, but also as seed money for this business venture. With her son and business partner, they created a clothing business that is doing fairly well. Sonan acknowledges the vital role of the UMC pension system in her entrepreneurial journey.



**Emmanuella Bodjo, 21 (Côte d'Ivoire)**

In the shadow of losing her father, the Reverend Noël Bodjo, Emmanuella was able to turn to the UMC pension plan for the light and support she needed to pursue her dream of becoming a chartered accountant. Initially, Esaie, Emmanuella's older brother, used the pension to fund his academic pursuits. Once he graduated, the baton was passed to Emmanuella. She used the pension funds wisely, focusing on covering tuition fees and essential academic materials.



*Opening worship at the CCP Forum with leadership from the West Africa Central Conference*

## CCP "Is a Way of Extending Our Mission Beyond Our Local Church"

For the Reverend Donald Dial and his wife, Christine, the decision to support the CCP program was a simple one based on the Wesleyan theology teaching that "the world is our mission." It was a way to extend the mission work they began during his ministry.



*Christine and Rev. Donald Dial*

Rev. Dial served as a United Methodist pastor in the Florida Annual Conference for 40 years before retiring in 2008. Throughout his many appointments across the conference, Rev. Dial faced—and overcame—challenges, some even similar to those the Church continues to experience today, including balancing different perspectives.

He began his first appointment in Belleview, Florida, where, for nine years, he and his congregation worked to see a new church built.

Years later during his appointment in Fort Lauderdale, Rev. Dial was tasked with guiding the church community through its first pastoral transition, which was challenging due to dissonance between staff and the new leadership. "The good news is, we were able to have 15 wonderful years there."

At the same time, Mrs. Dial was retiring from teaching middle school special education. As God's plan would have it, she received an invitation from the Bishop Tim Whitaker's wife, Melba, to join her on a mission trip to Guatemala. When she returned from the trip, Mrs. Dial was overcome with the call to lead missions.

Since then, Rev. and Mrs. Dial have led eight mission trips to Central America and the Caribbean with the help of the United Methodist Volunteers in Mission. To this day, they maintain the close connections they established over the years on their missions. "We are incredibly grateful to Melba for starting us on this journey, and for Wespeth for supporting retired clergy and families across the world," stated Mrs. Dial.

When Rev. Dial and his wife first read the stories of pensioners and their families in the CCP Newsletter they receive from Wespeth, they were inspired. Those stories, along with their first-hand experiences on their mission trips, moved them to donate to the CCP program. Rev. Dial shared that when he was

in Haiti, people were sharing stories that some folks had to walk several days to get to the district meetings. “We saw how difficult it can be to serve in different parts of the world, and we just want to say, ‘thank you,’” said Rev. Dial. “Wespath has been a tremendous blessing and asset in allowing us to accumulate a stable retirement income, so we want to pay it forward by helping the CCP program support others in global ministry.”

## Board of Pension Expresses Gratitude for CCP During Philippines Meeting



*Board of Pension presents plaque of recognition to Wespath's CCP team*

In August, Wespath's Dale Jones (managing director, Church Relations) and Ross Lundstrom (manager, Church Relations) joined representatives from the three episcopal areas in the Philippines for the first in-person Board of Pension meeting since the onset of the COVID pandemic. Jones and Lundstrom met with the newly appointed Philippines Central Conference Treasurer Ned P. Canlas to review the CCP program's services. They also had the opportunity to greet the newly elected Bishop Ruby-Nell Estrella, who previously served as the Central Conference's treasurer for five years.

Leading the session, Board of Pension Chair Liz Pajaro-Mariano expressed gratitude for Wespath's ongoing support to the Philippines Central Conference and presented Jones and Lundstrom with a plaque of acknowledgment and appreciation on behalf of the entire Board of Pension. The need for changes in benefit levels and corresponding actuarial analyses were also discussed at the meeting. Afterward, several attendees joined together for dinner. Lundstrom and Jones concluded their visit with worship at Central United Methodist Church the following morning.



*Sunday morning English worship service at Central UMC, near the Philippines Central Conference office*

## Visit to Lithuania Revitalizes Resilience of Smallest CCP Plan

In September, Thomas Kemper, a consultant for the CCP program, traveled to attend the 2023 Lithuania District Conference. In one of the conference sessions, time was dedicated to discussing matters related to the CCP program, but the session primarily served as a time for spiritual renewal and fellowship.

The meeting took place in the city of Kaunas, home to the first Methodist church in the Baltics (then Tsarist Russia), built in 1910. Although Lithuania is the CCP's smallest pension plan, the rebirth of the church after the communist regime is a testament to the strength of the congregations' faith.

Presiding over the opening worship led by District Superintendent Reverend Remigijus Matulaitis, Bishop Christian Alsted of the Northern Europe Central Conference (which encompasses the Scandinavian and Baltic regions) pronounced, “The CCP program enables the modest United Methodist Church in Lithuania to care for our clergy and employees in their retirement in significant ways beyond the meager public pension in the country. I am profoundly grateful that our connection through Wespath has made this possible.”



*Reverend Remigijus Matulaitis leads the opening worship*













*First Methodist church built in Kaunas, Lithuania*












## 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 	247	3	37
Liberia 	1,159	220	539
Mozambique 	272	37	43
West Angola 	427	87	80
East Angola 	75	21	22
Sierra Leone 	80	20	18
Zimbabwe 	320	51	48
Russia 	53	25	0
Philippines 	1,593	220	214
Nigeria 	350	41	85

Country	Active clergy	Retirees receiving payments	Surviving spouses/ beneficiaries receiving payments
East Africa 	836	204	163
East Congo 	405	92	83
Central Congo 	750	229	116
South Congo 	815	139	211
North Katanga 	527	277	254
South Africa 	8	2	2
Southern and Central Europe 	68	20	8
Lithuania 	2	0	0
Latvia 	8	4	8

### Total CCP Statistics

- Active pastors covered—**7,995**
- Retirees and Surviving spouses receiving support—**3,623**
- Total of all pension support funds released to date—**\$ 16,260,687\***

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

## Questions?

### Central Conference Pensions: Wespeth

1901 Chestnut Avenue  
Glenview, Illinois 60025-1604

Phone: **847-866-4017**  
E-mail: [ccp@wespath.org](mailto:ccp@wespath.org)  
Website: [wespath.org/ccp](http://wespath.org/ccp)

### 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