



CCP Update



Wespath
BENEFITS | INVESTMENTS

December 2025

CONSIDER DONATING TO CCP

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wespath.org/ccp.

Thank you!

Philippines Conference Treasurer Ned Canlas Visits Wespath

Wespath hosted Ned P. Canlas, treasurer for the Philippines Regional Conference, in September to discuss the future of the Philippines pension plan with the CCP team. The meeting allowed for review of the CCP program's services, current benefit levels and actuarial analyses, and sustainability for the Philippines CCP plan.



(L-r): Wespath's Dale Jones (managing director-Church Relations), Joe Halwax (senior managing director-Institutional Investment Services), Ned Canlas, Michelle Robinson (senior church relations specialist), and Ross Lundstrom (manager-Church Relations).

CCP Forum: A Week of Discussion, Worship and Fellowship

In November, Wespath's Central Conference Pensions (CCP) team traveled to Manila, Philippines, to host the biennial United Methodist Central Conference Pensions Forum. The five-day meeting brought together new and returning attendees, including benefits officers, treasurers, Board of Pensions members and chairs from across United Methodist regional conferences in the Philippines, Africa and Europe.

Each day began with a morning worship, setting a spiritual tone of collaboration for the discussions ahead. Wespath's CCP team presented alongside other experts on a mix of topics such as global trends for retirement plan offerings, the comparison of "pension" (defined benefit) plans and defined contribution plans, actuarial valuations, auditing programs, and best practices for conference staff and boards. Attendees also heard from fellow associates for local perspectives on managing and administering their conferences' pension plans.

In addition, representatives of each area's pension plan had a chance to meet with Wespath staff to ask questions, share feedback and explore the specific needs of their own plan. "While there is still work to do to make central conference pension plans sustainable, it is clear this group of representatives is a faith-filled, committed community of servants who have a passion for the success of their local plans," said Wespath's Bill Kavanaugh (chief operating officer).

Between sessions, attendees engaged in local fellowship and ministry. Wespath staff and other CCP Forum participants visited the Knox UMC Homeless Ministry, Mary Johnston Hospital and Intramuros (a centuries-old historic fortified district), as well as Philippine Christian University for a cultural show. Here's a look at the week's events.

Continued on next page

Following worldwide ratification of a General Conference amendment, the UMC's central conferences (and the United States) are now renamed regional conferences. Learn more at umnews.org/en/news/new-united-methodist-church-structure-ratified.

Due to this change, we're welcoming ideas for a new name for the Central Conference Pensions. Please send your suggestions to ccp@wespath.org.

CCP Financials as of 11/30/2025

\$28,406,148

Total donations received
(Inception to date)

\$100,456

Donations received
(Year to date)

\$899,351

Emergency grants
(2006–2012)

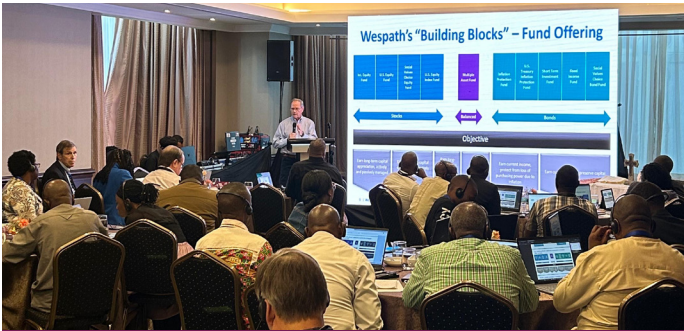
\$18,088,258

Pension funds distributed
(2007 to date)

\$1,365,181

Pension distributions
(Year to date)

CCP Forum Highlights (continued)



Wespath's Ross Lundstrom presents on pension reserves and oversight.



CCP program participants from the Democratic Republic of the Congo lead morning worship.



CCP Forum attendees help the Knox UMC Homeless Ministry distribute meal packages to people experiencing food insecurity in Manila.



(L-r): Thomas Kemper (CCP consultant), Bishop Ruby-Nell Estrella (Manila Episcopal Area), Liz Pajaro-Mariano (chair, Philippines Board of Pension), Wespath's Dale Jones, and Dr. Junifen F. Gauuan (president, Philippines Christian University) enjoy dinner together.



CCP Forum attendees engage in local recreation at a cultural show at Philippine Christian University.



After a week of informative sessions, CCP Forum attendees enjoy camaraderie during a tour of Intramuros.

Wespath General Secretary Returns to Africa with Chief Investment Officer

In June 2023, General Secretary Andy Hendren traveled to Mozambique and Zimbabwe to learn more about the context of The United Methodist Church (UMC) in Africa, and how we care for those serving around the globe through the CCP program. Hendren was deeply moved as he heard pensioners describe the personal sacrifices they had made in order to live into their calling to serve God.

Two years later, Hendren returned to Africa, this time with Chief Investment Officer (CIO) Johara Farhadieh as they visited the UMC's East Angola and West Angola Conferences. Along with Wespath's CCP consultant Thomas Kemper, Hendren and Farhadieh met with benefits officers, bishops and retirees; worshipped with local residents; and witnessed firsthand Church members' strong faith amid life challenges.

Continued on next page

Wespath in Angola (continued)

"I left our visits feeling deeply grateful, not only for the hospitality we received, but also for the chance to witness the impact of Wespath's work firsthand. Supporting spiritual leaders in the UMC's conferences around the world is exactly why we do what we do. Their stories remind us that behind every pension payment is a lifetime of service, and it's our responsibility to steward those resources with care, respect and purpose," Farhadieh said.

What follows are the stories of several pension recipients that the Wespath team heard from firsthand.

REVERENDS PEDRO AND BENVINDA JOÃO



Wespath's Johara Farhadieh and Thomas Kemper with Pedro and Benvinda João and East Angola Conference Benefits Officer Alcides Martins (far left).

When Rev. Pedro João and his wife Rev. Benvinda were ordained in 1977, the East Angola Episcopal Area had just recently been established, with only 12 pastors serving the area. Benvinda joined as the conference's first female pastor.

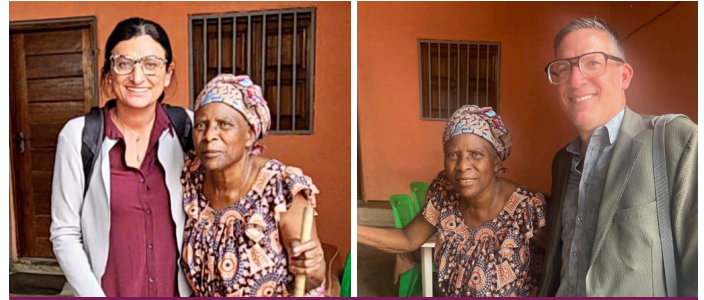
During their service, the Angolan civil war divided the country and destroyed entire communities. Benvinda lost her mother, grandmother, and several nieces and nephews during the conflict. Yet both she and her husband stayed committed to rebuilding what was lost.

Benvinda later served as a district superintendent, with Pedro serving as administrative director of the conference and as director of Quessua Mission, which provides infrastructure in agriculture, health, nutrition, education and developing the surroundings. Thanks to the CCP program, the couple can continue to support their community in new ways.



Wespath's Andy Hendren visited Quessua Mission during his trip to Angola this summer [shown here with Bishop Moisés Bernardo Jungo (Angola East Episcopal Area)].

REGINA BERNARDO SAMUEL



Wespath's Johara Farhadieh and Andy Hendren with Regina Bernardo Samuel.

When Hendren, Farhadieh and Kemper visited Regina Bernardo Samuel in her home, she welcomed them with the words, "Where there is unity, there is joy in the house."

Twenty-eight years after losing her husband—a United Methodist pastor—to a tragic car accident in 1997, Regina continues to live with gratitude and resilience. At 75, Regina feels blessed to be surrounded by her 10 children and 15 grandchildren.

After carefully building her home over many years, Regina is grateful for the pension she receives through the CCP program, which makes it possible for her to live with dignity and financial security.

MARCELINA LUCIANO

Before he passed away in 2011, Marcelina Luciano's husband served as a United Methodist pastor who helped start the church near the home Marcelina still lives in today. At 83, Marcelina and her three grandchildren take care of each other, but not without struggle.

With quiet strength, Marcelina shared the reality her family faces today: due to banking difficulties, they received only one pension payment this year as of July 2025. "We were going hungry," she said. Marcelina relayed her gratitude for the CCP program, which helps bring food to her table.

Marcelina's granddaughter Rosária José, 17, accompanied Wespath's visit. The pair brought the Wespath team to a tree outside their home that had been planted by Bishop Moisés Fernandes when the church acquired the land to build a temple. Standing under the tree, Rosária spoke of her dream to one day spread justice within her community: "Quero ser advogada" ("I want to be a lawyer").



Wespath's Johara Farhadieh with Marcelina Luciano and her granddaughter Rosária José.



Wespath Welcomes Mozambique Benefits Officer Rev. Filimão Vilanculo

In August, Rev. Filimão Vilanculo, benefits officer for the Mozambique Episcopal Area, traveled to the U.S. for the first time for a week of business, sightseeing and meeting with Wespath employees. While at Wespath, Rev. Vilanculo taught employees about Mozambique culture and challenges, talked about his personal journey of service, and shared stories about retired clergy and families in his country.

Methodism in Mozambique dates back to the 1890s. Like in much of Africa, the UMC in Mozambique is growing. The UMC has been a force of positive change, particularly in rural areas. Rev. Vilanculo explained that preaching and teaching go hand-in-hand in Mozambique, where Methodism is strongly rooted in education.

“My father was a Methodist minister, and I saw how using his teaching skills while also preaching gospel changed people’s lives. I followed my father’s example—first becoming a teacher and later going to seminary so I could bring changes that would come through the word of God to my country’s remote areas.” Today’s pastors study agriculture as part of the seminary curriculum and continue this holistic pathway—serving as the community’s spiritual leader while also teaching villagers ways to improve their farming.



(L-r): Wespath's Dale Jones, Rev. Filimão Vilanculo and Thomas Kemper at Wespath.



Wespath's Bill Kavanaugh and Rev. Filimão Vilanculo visit a local UMC church in Mozambique in spring 2025.

In 2014, Rev. Vilanculo transitioned from a more traditional pastor role to his current calling: spearheading Mozambique’s pension plan. Today, Mozambique’s pension plan stands out as one of the best-managed among the CCP-supported plans. Collaboration with Wespath has been a key ingredient for success. “We very much appreciate the collaboration with Wespath—not just the financial support, but the technical support and partnership. Wespath helps us to see a future.”

Despite the lack of monetary salary for many clergy, Rev. Vilanculo has seen good success convincing more than 70% of pastors to contribute to their pension. He explained, “Pastors would say: ‘but the church doesn’t pay me. How can I afford a contribution?’ And I would ask back: ‘If you’re struggling to survive when you’re young and healthy enough to grow your own food, how will you survive when you are older?’ So, slowly our clergy have started to understand the importance of saving for their future in any way they can.”

As Rev. Vilanculo prepared to return to Mozambique, he told his CCP partners: “Being invited to come here speaks volumes about our partnership with Wespath. Everyone at Wespath was welcoming and helped me feel ‘at home’ here.”

Holiday Greetings From Wespath

As 2025 winds down, we reflect on the value of our relationships with those we serve. Thank you for your continued support of Wespath and the CCP program. Wishing you blessings of grace, peace and joy throughout this holiday season and in the new year ahead. View our 2025 holiday message at wespath.org/about-wespath/Christmas-Card-1.

Questions?

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