Wespath







CONNECTIONAL PENSION SUPPORT







2026 REPORT

Connected in Mission Across the Church

a general agency of The United Methodist Church



Wespath's General Secretary Andy Hendren, Chief Investment Officer Johara Farhadieh, and Thomas Kemper (CPS consultant) meet with staff, board members and surviving spouses of the West Angola pension plan at the Methodist University of Angola in Luanda in June 2025.

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Cover photographs (left to right (L-R), top to bottom): Terezinha Lainda Munuane (Mozambique), Rev. Azarias Sefula Inguane (Mozambique), Pastor Joaquim Domingos João (East Angola), Rev. Longo Flomo (Liberia), Rev. Victor Zefanias Mavulule (Mozambique), Rev. Sumo Kpowowoe (Liberia)

Greetings from Wespath's General Secretary

Greetings,

I'm delighted to share Wespath's 2026 Connectional Pension Support Report—our biennial reflection on our ministry of care across the worldwide United Methodist connection.

I am incredibly grateful to have been in attendance when the regional conference constitutional amendments were approved at the 2024 United Methodist Church (UMC) General Conference--a historic moment of change, and a reminder that God's work in the Church continues with steady purpose. Those changes are reflected throughout this report, including an important update to the program itself: the previous name of the program that administered the central conference pension plans, Central Conference Pensions, has been renamed Connectional Pension Support (CPS) to account for the now-regional conferences and corresponding pension plans.

Although the name has changed, the promise at the heart of our work has not. The CPS program continues to help provide a steady source of retirement income for about 3,700 clergy and surviving family members across Africa, the Philippines and Europe. These lives have been shaped by ministry, and strengthened the communities they serve.

An Inspired View

In June 2025, I traveled to Africa with Wespath Chief Investment Officer Johara Farhadieh to visit the UMC's East Angola and West Angola Conferences. We met with pension officers, bishops and retirees; worshipped with local residents; and witnessed firsthand CPS program beneficiaries' strong faith amid life challenges. Johara captured the meaning of our visits with pension recipients beautifully:

"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. Behind every pension payment is a lifetime of service, and it's our responsibility to steward those resources with care, respect and purpose."

– Johara Farhadieh, Wespath Chief Investment Officer

Walking With You in Times of Change

The past several years have brought meaningful change across the Church: structural shifts, leadership transitions, and evolving needs in conferences around the world. Yet, through it all, our commitment to walk with you remains steady. The CPS program is, at its core, connectional support. The program is a consistent companion in times of change, rooted in shared mission and sustained by enduring partnership.

Thank you for the trust you place in Wespath and your collaboration in this ministry. Together, we will walk on—through new beginnings and the steady, faithful work of strengthening retirement security for United Methodists across the world.

Grace and Peace,



Andy Hendren
General Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Wespath
President, Overseas Pension Corporation

Connectional Pension Support (CPS) At-A-Glance

The CPS program traces its origins to General Conference 2000, when United Methodist leaders established a task force of bishops and general secretaries to address the lack of retirement security for clergy in many regional conferences. Four years later, *The Book of Discipline* was amended to formally authorize the Central Conference Pension Initiative (CCPI) to build pension programs outside the U.S. under the direction of Wespath.

Following the successful completion of a $25 million fundraising goal in 2013, the program was renamed Central Conference Pensions, shifting to long-term pension development, administration and support. Today, with the new 'Connectional Pension Support' name, the program reflects the Church's evolving structure while continuing its longstanding commitment to care for those who have served in ministry.

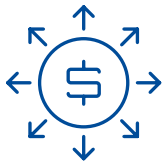
The CPS program works alongside regional leaders to strengthen plan sustainability and expand long-term retirement security. While CPS support for these programs remains stable, sustainability and administrative capacity vary by plan. As part of its ongoing commitment to stewardship and responsiveness, the Wespath CPS team regularly evaluates funding approaches to ensure they align with the evolving needs of the plans and the communities they serve.

The CPS program has demonstrated what is possible when United Methodists come together across borders in shared mission, strengthening the Church's ability to care for those who serve with dignity, compassion and connection.

CPS By the Numbers



$28.5 million+
in total donations
received inception to date through June 30, 2026



$19.2 million+
in pension funds distributed from January 1, 2007, to June 30, 2026



6,600+
active clergy



3,700+
retirees and surviving spouses receiving support



69 annual conferences within the regional conferences
receive financial assistance through CPS

Click here or scan the QR code for more resources about the mission and history of the CPS program.

A Note from the Chief Operating Officer

Across the worldwide United Methodist connection, the ministry of caring for those who have served requires both compassion and commitment. That calling is at the heart of Wespath's CPS program: to help provide retirement income to clergy and surviving family members who have devoted their lives to ministry.

In March 2025, I had the opportunity to travel to Maputo, Mozambique, where I met with Rev. Filimao Vilanculo, benefits officer of the three annual conferences in Mozambique, as well as pension recipients, including retired pastors, surviving spouses and their families. Listening to their stories was a powerful reminder that behind every benefit payment is a life of faithful service, and that the support provided through the CPS program is deeply personal. For many, these benefits are not simply helpful; they are essential. I was thrilled to welcome Rev. Filimao to Wespath later in 2025. His visit reflected the depth of partnership between CPS leadership and regional conferences (see article on **page 11**).

Later that year, I joined the CPS team in Manila, Philippines, for the biennial Pensions Forum. The gathering brought together pension officers, treasurers, Board of Pensions members and board chairs from regional conferences across the Philippines, Africa and Europe. These conversations made clear that while each pension plan's circumstances are unique, there is a shared commitment to strengthening pension plans for the long term.

This spirit of partnership matters. The long-term health of these pension plans depends on careful oversight, transparency and steady collaboration between the local areas, which are the actual plan sponsors of the pension plans, and Wespath. In this report, you will find pension plan updates and financial information intended to help identify strengths, highlight areas of risk and support informed decision-making. This work is not always easy, but it is necessary if we are to honor the clergy, spouses and families who depend on these benefits.

The CPS program continues to be an expression of connectional support: steady, faithful and rooted in our shared responsibility to care for those who serve. The stories and data in this report point to both the progress that has been made and the work that remains. I am grateful for your partnership in this ministry, and I pray that together we will continue strengthening these plans for the generations to come.



Bill Kavanaugh
Chief Operating Officer, Wespath
Vice President, Overseas Pension Corporation



Wespath's Chief Operating Officer Bill Kavanaugh and Thomas Kemper (CPS consultant) with benefits officer Rev. Filimao Vilanculo and pensions recipients of the Mozambique Episcopal Area at the home of CPS program beneficiary Joaneta Esteves Timbe in Maputo, Mozambique in March 2025.

CPS Program Updates

A New Program Name

Following the UMC's adoption of Worldwide Regionalization, the term 'central conference' became obsolete as these bodies were redefined as 'regional conferences.' In alignment with this denominational change, Wespath undertook a process to rename the Central Conference Pensions (CCP) program. Wespath sought to ensure that the program's name reflected the updated structure while remaining meaningful for global audiences. Because 'regional conferences' now also encompass the United States as well as the former central conferences, it did not seem appropriate to simply change the name to 'Regional Conference Pensions.' Accordingly, the team undertook a consultative process for a successor name for the program. Potential names were gathered from multiple sources, including Wespath staff, Board members and other stakeholders. From these, three leading options were identified. To ensure global input and foster ownership among those served by the program, Wespath invited pension officers and leaders in Africa, Europe and the Philippines to rank their preferences among the three options.

'Connectional Pension Support' emerged as the top choice of both the Wespath team that supports this work and the group of surveyed pension officers and leaders. 'Connectional' honors the program's origins as a denomination-wide initiative rooted in the United Methodist tradition of shared mission and collective support. The term 'support' includes the full scope of the program's work, not only financial assistance, but also consulting services, actuarial valuations, investment management and audits that support the pension plans globally. Board members of the Overseas Pension Corporation (OPC), which governs the pension program, affirmed 'Connectional Pension Support' as the new name for the program through email consensus. The updated name was announced to the Church via a press release on May 11, 2026. The new CPS logo also visually reflects the mission of the program. The world map symbolizes the program's global reach and connection across the UMC, while the UMC Cross and Flame emblem represents its foundation in the denomination's shared mission and commitment to caring for those who serve.

Pension Plan Sponsors No Longer in the UMC

Unlike prior biennial reports, this report does not include a summary of the Eurasia and Cote d'Ivoire pension plans. The Eurasia Episcopal Area completed the Disciplinary process of leaving the UMC to become an autonomous Methodist Church, the Christian Methodist Church of Eurasia, with action by the General Conference in 2024 and ratification by the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference in April 2025. After the General Conference in 2024, the Cote d'Ivoire Annual Conference voted to withdraw from the UMC to become l'Eglise Methodiste de Cote d'Ivoire, The Methodist Church of Cote d'Ivoire.

The CPS program is unable to provide ongoing funding and no-cost consulting, valuations, audits and similar services for non-United Methodist pension plans. Wespath expects these pension plans will meet their obligations for United Methodist service accrued before the separations from the UMC occurred.

Working with consulting actuaries from Willis Towers Watson, the OPC Board affirmed providing a final sum for pension plans whose conference or episcopal area exited the UMC equal to the lesser of the plan's

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Click here or scan the QR code to read the program name change press release.

unfunded liability for United Methodist service or the present value of future CPS pension support funds based on current funding levels.

The OPC Board also approved the possible provision of a final administration support grant for conferences or episcopal areas that left the UMC via the prescribed Disciplinary process detailed in ¶572 of *The Book of Discipline*. Such payments were contingent on the leadership of the separating conference or area signing an affidavit attesting the funds would be used to help provide pension benefits earned for United Methodist service.

Accordingly, The Methodist Church of Cote d'Ivoire received a final settlement based on the future value of CPS pension support had the Church remained United Methodist. The Eurasia pension plan was fully funded according to the most recent actuarial valuation, but was given a final grant for administrative support to assist with the costs of providing pensions for pre-separation United Methodist service. The Eurasia and Cote d'Ivoire pension plans were among the better funded and administered plans supported by the CPS program.

Connectional Support and Global Engagement During Times of Change

There have been numerous changes in pension officers and Board of Pensions members in the last few years due to changes in episcopal leadership, the creation of new episcopal areas, deaths, pension personnel being assigned new and different duties, disaffiliation from the UMC, or terms expiring and new leaders being selected. At the November 2025 Pensions Forum that Wespath sponsored in Manila, half of the 36 attendees were new in their roles and had not attended the most recent 2023 Pensions Forum in Nairobi. In some cases there was little or no transitional support for new, inexperienced personnel and even a lack of access to prior records at some offices. The CPS team consequently sees a need to provide orientation and onboarding materials for individuals who are newly working with pension plans. The Pensions Forum is a way Wespath addresses this need, providing pension leaders with opportunities for orientation, training, peer learning and collaboration to strengthen plan administration and sustainability.



Wespath's Tori Luke (meeting and event planner), Frederick Hyland and Michelle Robinson with students from Philippine Christian University that Pensions Forum attendees visited in Manila, Philippines in November 2025 after their first day of meetings.

Engaging with Pensions Leaders

Active support of the pension plan by resident bishops within each episcopal area is essential to driving long-term success and advancing the sustainability of local area plans. Significant changes and turnover of key pension staff leaders over the last few years highlight the need for bishops to be involved with the oversight and identification of new staff to lead the pension program within their episcopal area. The CPS team has been increasingly diligent over the last quadrennium about meeting directly with bishops and reviewing current issues and challenges within their area. The CPS team met with new bishops at the April 2025 and April 2026 Council of Bishops meetings, to discuss how the episcopal offices can advance the sustainability of their pension plan.

Partnerships with bishops and other pension leaders have proven to be essential for helping episcopal areas make significant plan revisions or consider modifications based on the changing landscape of pension solutions. As the CPS team continues to work with local plan sponsors toward plan sustainability, pension leaders will be challenged to collaborate around appropriate solutions and effective implementation of necessary changes to their pension program.

Fall 2024

Strengthening Connections in the Philippines

CPS team members met with regional conference leaders in the Philippines to strengthen relationships and explore opportunities for collaboration. The visit led to the decision to host the 2025 Pensions Forum in the Philippines for the first time.



(L-R): Wespath's Michelle Robinson; Bishop Tracy Smith Malone (then president of the Council of Bishops); Liz Mariano (Chair of Philippines Regional Conference Board of Pensions); and Thomas Kemper (CPS consultant).

February 2025

Advancing Sustainability in Liberia

The Liberia Annual Conference unanimously approved a redesigned pension plan focused on long-term sustainability. The changes, developed through more than a year of collaboration among conference leaders, the Board of Pensions and the CPS team, took effect in April 2025.



The 192nd session of the Liberia Annual Conference in Gbarnga, Liberia.

March–April 2025

Navigating Leadership Transitions in Africa

CPS leaders joined the Africa Regional Conference gathering as four new bishops were elected and the regional structure was reorganized. Follow-up meetings in Chicago continued conversations about sustainable pension systems and support through leadership transitions.



Wespath's Bill Kavanaugh with Rev. Dr. Aleze M. Fulbright, executive assistant to Indiana Conference Bishop Tracy S. Maloneat, at the 14th Quadrennial session of the Africa Regional Conference (previously the Africa Central Conference) in Johannesburg, South Africa.

March–June 2025

Listening, Learning and Strengthening Partnerships

CPS leaders continued meeting directly with conference leaders and pension participants. In Mozambique, conversations with local leadership and pension recipients offered firsthand perspective on how pension benefits support retired clergy and their families.



(L-R): Wespath's Johara Farhadieh, Andy Hendren, Bishop Gaspar João Domingos and Thomas Kemper (CPS consultant) meet in Luanda, West Angola Episcopal Area.

February–March 2026

Deepening Relationships in West Africa

Visits to Sierra Leone and Liberia focused on strengthening pension administration, governance and communication. Meetings with leaders, retirees and surviving spouses reinforced the importance of sustainable plans and continued participant support.



CPS team members meet with leaders, retirees and surviving spouses in Sierra Leone.

August 2026

Fortifying Partnerships in Latvia

CPS team members joined the Latvia Annual Conference to connect with conference and pension leaders and discuss continued support for the Latvia pension program. The visit also provided an opportunity to meet with retired Rev. Gita Medne, who helped establish the pension plan from 2012–2013.



(L-R): Wespath's Ross Lundstrom, Rev. Gita Medne (former District Superintendent for Latvia) and Wespath's Dale Jones.

Global Collaboration at the Pensions Forum

In November 2025, the Wespath team hosted the biennial Pensions Forum in Manila, Philippines—the first time the gathering was held outside of Africa. The five-day event brought together pension officers, treasurers and Board of Pensions members from across the Philippines, Africa and Europe.

Each day began with worship, grounding conversations in a shared sense of purpose. Sessions covered topics such as retirement plan design, actuarial valuations, auditing practices and global trends in pension systems. Attendees also participated in one-on-one discussions with CPS staff to address the specific needs of their plans.

Attendee feedback reflected strong engagement and overall satisfaction with the Pensions Forum experience. Nearly all attendees reported that their expectations were met or exceeded, citing clarity of presentations, relevance of content to real-world challenges, and the openness and accessibility of Wespath staff as positives.

Attendees valued the opportunity to deepen their understanding of pension administration, governance and long-term sustainability, while also exchanging ideas and experiences with peers from other regions. First-time attendees highlighted the importance of foundational learning, while returning attendees appreciated opportunities to explore technical topics and share best practices.

At the same time, feedback pointed to opportunities to refine the Forum, particularly the desire for more time dedicated to discussion, peer learning and smaller group conversations to address context-specific challenges. These insights will help shape future Forums, as the Forum continues to grow as both a training resource and a collaborative learning community.

Reflecting on the gathering, Chief Operating Officer Bill Kavanaugh shared, "While there is still work to do to make regional conference pension plans sustainable, it is clear these attendees are faith-filled servants committed to the success of their local plans."

Between sessions, attendees engaged in fellowship and ministry experiences, including visits to Mary Johnston Hospital and Knox UMC Homeless Ministry in Manila, where they distributed meal packages to people experiencing food insecurity in local areas, further strengthening relationships across the connection.



In November 2025, the Wespath team hosted the biennial Pensions Forum in Manila, Philippines.

Visits with Regional Conference Leadership Strengthen Global Connections

As part of its ongoing commitment to connectional support, Wespath welcomes pension officers and Church leaders from across the global United Methodist connection to its U.S. office in Glenview, Illinois. These visits provide valuable opportunities to strengthen relationships, share knowledge and explore ways to support the evolving needs of pension plans and the communities they serve.

August 2025

Welcoming Mozambique Leadership to Wespath

Rev. Filimao Vilanculo, benefits officer of the three annual conferences in Mozambique, spent a week at Wespath's office. His visit reflected the depth of partnership between CPS leadership and regional conferences, offering time for both strategic discussions and relationship-building.

Rev. Vilanculo met with members of the CPS team and Wespath leadership to discuss plan administration, funding considerations and the growing need to address clergy healthcare alongside pension support. Conversations with actuarial and client services teams provided deeper insight into funding strategies and operational practices.



Rev. Filimao Vilanculo (benefits officer of the three annual conferences in Mozambique) shares about the Mozambique pension program with Wespath staff in Glenview, Illinois.

The visit also included time for fellowship and engagement with Wespath staff, which fostered a shared understanding of the global impact of CPS's work. During Wespath's special "Called to Serve" event, Rev. Vilanculo shared insights into life in Mozambique, including its culture and challenges, and the experiences of retired clergy and their families in his country. He also reflected on his personal journey of service. He also attended Wespath's annual summer staff event, engaging with employees in a more informal setting.

September 2025

Collaboration with Philippines Pension Leadership

Ned Canlas, treasurer of the Philippines Regional Conference, visited Wespath to discuss the Philippines pension plan with the CPS team, focusing on actuarial valuation, funding considerations and investment strategy. During his visit, Ned also attended the Paragraph 717 Gathering Wespath hosted in September 2025 to begin a discussion about proposed edits to Paragraph 717 (Paragraph 717 in *The Book of Discipline* addresses Sustainable and Socially Responsible Investments).

Meetings with Wespath's actuarial and investment teams provided an opportunity to explore practical solutions to support long-term plan sustainability. These focused conversations reinforced the importance of equipping pension leaders with the tools and knowledge needed to navigate both local realities and global financial considerations.



The CPS team and Ned Canlas (treasurer of the Philippines Regional Conference) discuss the Philippines pension plan with Wespath's Joe Halwax, senior managing director,Institutional Investment Services, in Glenview, Illinois.

February 2026

Ongoing Dialogue with Central Congo Leadership

Joseph Tunda Museu, pension officer for the Central Congo Episcopal Area, and his spouse, Symphorose, made a brief visit to Wespath in February 2026. Discussions centered on pension plan administration and investment options, as well as Wespath's approach to sustainable investing in a global context.

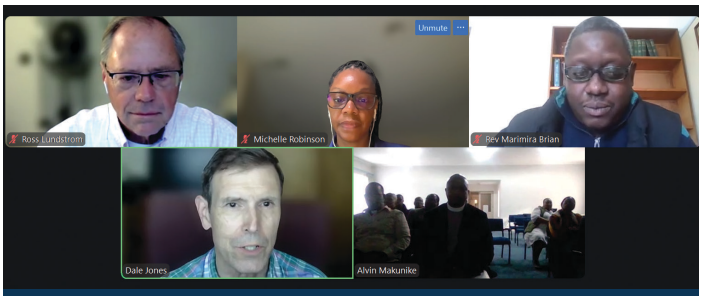


(L-R): Wespath's Dale Jones, Joseph Tunda Museu (pension officer for the Central Congo Episcopal Area), Joseph's wife Symphorose, and Wespath's Michelle Robinson at Wespath's office in Glenview, Illinois.

April 2026

Conversations with Bishops During the Council of Bishops Meeting

As noted, the support and involvement of the bishop can be a significant factor in the success of a pension plan. Conversations during the Council of Bishops meeting in Jacksonville, Florida, provided further opportunities to discuss pension plan sustainability issues, including plan governance, funding challenges, administrative issues, and potential plan revisions or alternatives. Scheduled meetings as well as a few impromptu conversations provided insights and updates from several episcopal areas throughout Africa. Topics of discussion also included audit findings, resource constraint challenges, regulatory environments and the impact of regional instability.



When in-person visits aren't feasible, the CPS team meets with pension leaders virtually. Pictured: Wespath's CPS team meets with Rev. Brian Marimira (Chair of the Southern Africa Regional Conference Board of Pensions) during an event for Southern Africa Regional Conference pastors.

CPS Program Administration

Pension plans within the CPS program are "owned" by the episcopal area or regional conference in which the plan operates, known as the "plan sponsor." While Wespath administers the CPS program and serves as the trustee of the CPS endowment, it is ultimately the responsibility of the plan sponsor to adhere to their plan document and local regulatory requirements and ensure that pension benefits are made available to those clergy who faithfully serve the UMC. The CPS endowment is the pool of money fundraised and invested that supports the CPS program and enables Wespath to provide financial assistance to pension plans in regional conferences.

Wespath's CPS team consists of Wespath staff and a consultant supported by Wespath's Chief Operating Officer Bill Kavanaugh, General Secretary Andy Hendren, the Wespath Board of Directors and the Board of the OPC, a subsidiary of Wespath. Wespath has been intentional in utilizing other areas within the organization over the last quadrennium for the benefit of the CPS program. Wespath's Actuarial Services, Investments, Marketing and Communications, and Customer Service Departments have increased their support levels to the CPS program. For example, the next set of biennial actuarial reports (with data as of the end of 2026) will be prepared within Wespath rather than by an external vendor.

Members of the Wespath CPS Team



Dale Jones
Managing Director, Church Relations



Ross Lundstrom,
Church Relations Manager



Michelle Robinson,
Senior Church Relations Specialist



Thomas Kemper
CPS Consultant

The following illustration shares more about how the CPS program comes together in service to the participants.

Wespath Staff

- Plan and administration consulting
- Investment management, consulting and support (optional service offering)
- Education and training for pension officers and boards of pensions

Pension Plan

- Plan administration
- Participant support and education
- Plan compliance, legal and local registration
- Oversight of individual pension plan investments and assets

Funded By CPS

- Audit services
- Biennial actuarial valuation reports
- Financial support for pension payments and to assist with plan administration expense

Participants

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The CPS program serves pension plans in countries throughout the regional conferences.



CPS Program Support

Through the CPS endowment, the program provides two forms of financial support to the local episcopal areas to be specifically used for the pension plan: benefit payment support and administrative funds.

Per the agreement with each episcopal area, Wespath provides financial support for a portion of the pension plan benefit payments to retirees and surviving spouses, primarily for the benefits earned prior to the establishment of the program and a portion of the benefits earned since the program's inception. All plans in the program are contributory plans, meaning there are participant, church and potentially annual conference or episcopal area contributions that are accumulated and used to meet the benefit payment needs above what is provided by the CPS program, as outlined when the plan was initially established. The collected and deposited contributions are a critical element for fully funding pension payments over time. Wespath is carefully monitoring shortfalls in some plans that will require certain episcopal areas to fund through other sources, which may be challenging for many plan sponsors.

In addition, the CPS program provides administrative funds regularly. This is intended to cover part of the pension plan administration costs, with additional financial support coming from the episcopal area. These funds are limited, originating from sources different than the generous donations from across the Church for supporting pension payments. Therefore, all CPS-supported episcopal areas and plan sponsors are regularly reminded that they should build a reserve balance for future needs since the administrative funds are finite and cannot be assumed to be indefinitely available.

CPS support extends beyond monetary contributions. The program contracts with Holbrook Global Limited to conduct onsite visits and audits of most pension plans every three years. These extensive in-person audits confirm adherence to administrative procedures and the pension plan document, receipt of accurate and timely benefit payments to retirees and surviving spouses, and adequate controls. Key pension leadership, including the bishop for awareness, receive a written report outlining items that should be addressed by leadership within the plan sponsor organization.

Wespath also provides actuarial valuations every two years. These valuations provide an assessment of the cost of the pension plan versus the expected assets that will be available over time to meet benefit payment needs. Reported data includes current and expected future funding levels, yearly cash flows, projected shortfalls, projected contributions above what is required for the current benefit payments to fully fund the plan within 15 years of the date of the valuation, and more. This information is intended to help pension leaders, Board of Pensions chairpersons and the bishops guide their pension plans toward sustainability.



CPS program beneficiaries from the Nigeria Episcopal Area meet to discuss pension payments.

Pension Plan Sustainability

Without proactive action, some pension plans face the risk of financial instability, which could leave current and future pensioners and their families without the retirement income they depend upon. However, with strong governance, adequate funding, consistent monitoring and timely reforms, pension plans can move toward long-term sustainability and stability.

While certain plans face administrative challenges, the most common and pressing sustainability concerns are financial. Specifically, many pension plans do not generate sufficient income to cover the cost of benefits being earned. Weaknesses in plan administration such as incomplete or inaccurate recordkeeping can further compound these financial challenges.

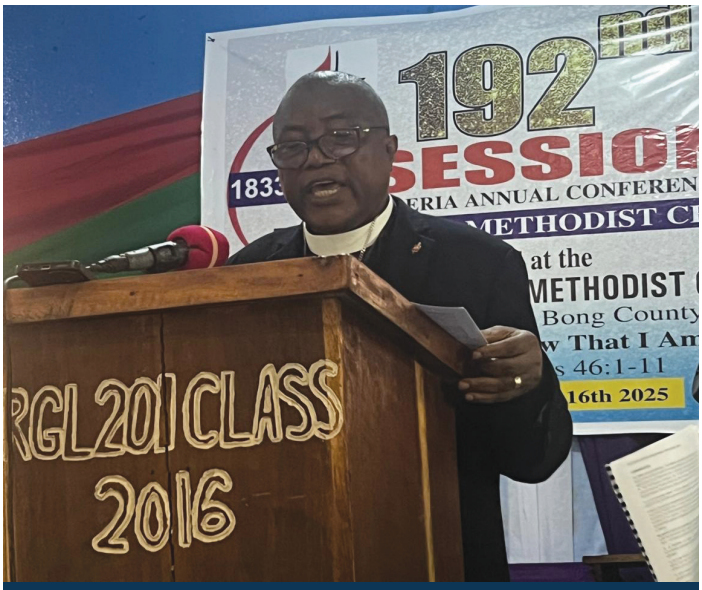
For example, most pension plans specify that participants earn pension credit only for periods in which contributions are made. Incomplete contribution records may result in benefits being paid for periods in which no contributions were received. Similarly, where benefit levels are tied to years of credited service, inaccurate service records may lead to incorrect benefit calculations, placing additional strain on plan resources.

Key Funding Challenges

Two primary funding challenges are consistently observed across pension plans:

- **Inadequate contribution levels relative to plan costs:** Even when contributions are collected in full, the prescribed rates for church and clergy contributions may be insufficient to meet the normal cost of the plan (the income required each year to fund the benefits earned during that period). Addressing this challenge typically requires an increase in contributions, a reduction in benefits, or a combination of both.
- **Incomplete or inconsistent contribution collection:** In some cases, churches and/or clergy do not contribute at the levels required by the plan, and in certain situations contributions are not made at all. These circumstances often necessitate enhanced education and communication efforts to ensure that participants understand the importance of contributions and the direct relationship between contributions and future benefits. As noted above, accurate and complete contribution records are essential to ensure benefits are paid only for periods in which contributions were made.

It is not uncommon for plans to experience both of these challenges simultaneously, which significantly intensifies sustainability concerns.



Bishop Samuel Quire of the Liberia Annual Conference speaks about changes required for the pension plan to become more sustainable at the 192nd session.

Potential Approaches to Improving Sustainability

A range of measures may be considered to strengthen pension plan sustainability, including:

- Improving adherence to required contribution levels, particularly in conferences or episcopal areas where clergy compensation is centrally administered, which can help ensure more consistent contribution collection.
- Increasing contribution rates or amounts prescribed by the plan.
- Reducing benefit obligations through plan design changes, which may include:
  - Adjusting benefit formulas to lower future pension amounts; in severe cases, this could include evaluating current benefit levels.
  - Revising vesting requirements to increase the number of years of service required for pension eligibility.
  - Restricting eligibility to certain categories of clergy or to those meeting minimum compensation thresholds.
- Identifying additional, ongoing sources of funding to support pension obligations.

The Role of Participant Confidence

Funding and participation challenges may be exacerbated when clergy and churches question the long-term viability of the pension plan. In such cases, clear and consistent communication is essential. Effectively communicating the rationale for proposed changes and the anticipated financial impact can help build understanding, strengthen confidence and reinforce the importance of participation in the plan.

Wespath's Role in Supporting Sustainability

Wespath's CPS team remains committed to supporting conference and episcopal area leadership, pension officers, and Boards of Pensions in evaluating and implementing strategies to improve sustainability. This support may include actuarial analysis, assessment of plan design options and evaluation of various funding scenarios.

Ultimately, however, decisions regarding plan design, funding and implementation reside with the respective conferences and episcopal areas, which are responsible for administering their pension plans.

Alternative Approaches to Sustainability

In certain contexts, participation in a national government pension or social security system may represent the most viable long-term solution. In other cases, transitioning from a traditional defined benefit pension plan to a defined contribution structure for future service may be appropriate.

Although defined contribution plans may produce relatively modest retirement income in environments with low clergy compensation, they do not create the long-term liabilities associated with traditional pension plans. As a result, they may help reduce the risk of plans becoming unable to meet their obligations over time.

Additional Sustainability Practices

In addition to funding and plan design considerations, other essential practices for supporting long-term sustainability include:

- Prudent investment management, with a focus on long-term performance, diversification and appropriate risk-return balance.
- Maintaining an engaged and capable Board of Pensions to provide ongoing governance and oversight.
- Regular evaluation of participant data and demographic trends to ensure actuarial assumptions remain aligned with current and future conditions.
- Ongoing education and communication with participants, particularly regarding plan provisions, expectations and any proposed changes.

A Long-Term Commitment

Achieving and maintaining pension plan sustainability is a long-term, ongoing process that requires consistent attention and collaboration. In many regions, this work is further shaped by broader challenges such as economic conditions, infrastructure limitations, political instability, church transitions or government restrictions.

Through continued partnership, careful planning and thoughtful adaptation, Wespath remains committed to supporting regional conference pension plans as they navigate these complexities, working together to help ensure that clergy who have faithfully served are provided for in retirement.



Wespath's Chief Investment Officer Johara Farhadieh (Center) and Thomas Kemper (CPS consultant, two left of Johara) with pension leaders of the East Angola Episcopal Area.

Global View of Benefits and Individual Plans

While each plan is the responsibility of the individual conference or episcopal area, Wespath provides consulting services for administering successful and sustainable plans.

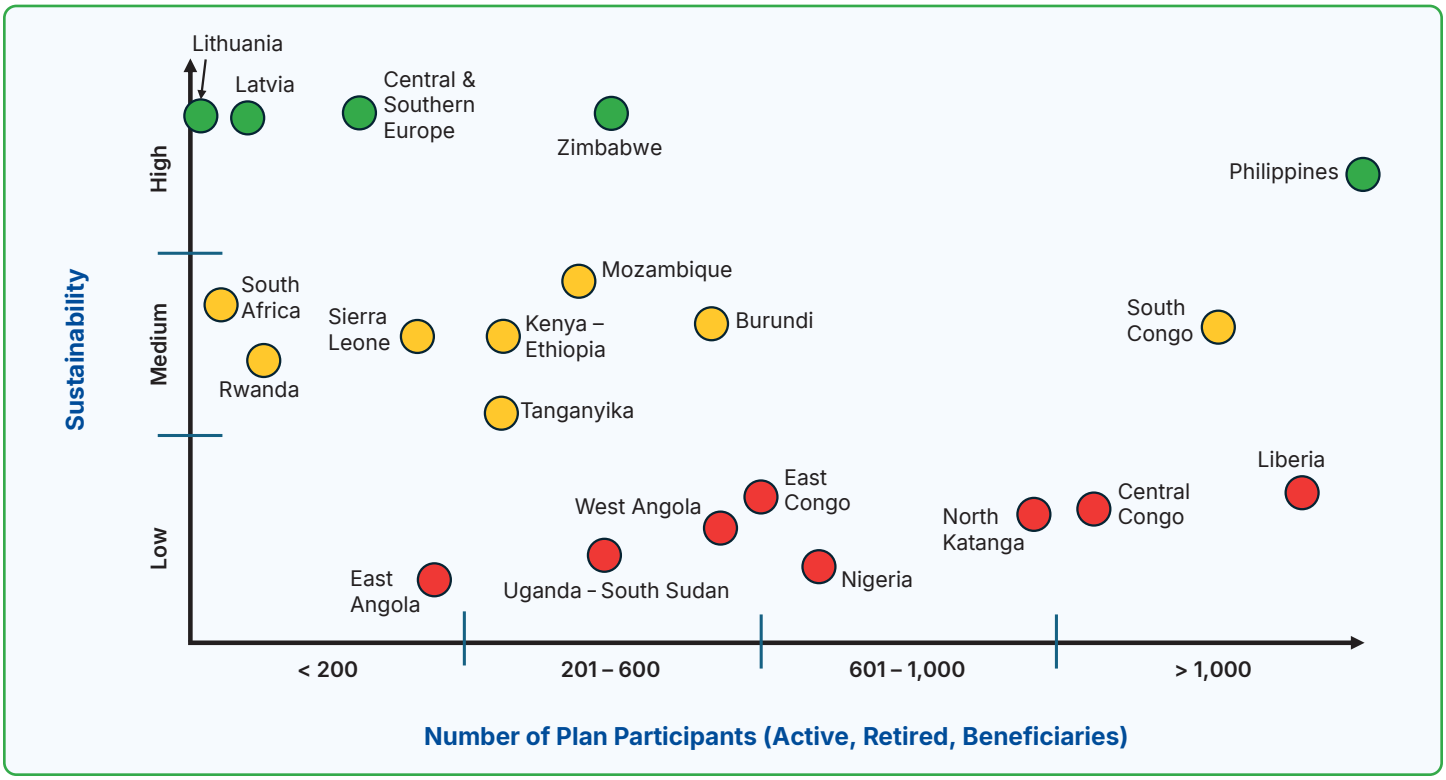
Wespath has shared details below on each plan's long-term sustainability, including overall risk, assessments, challenges, and recent updates. Each plan's overall assessment is based on two primary areas: Plan Funding and Financial Status, and Plan Management, Administration and Compliance. One indicator of a plan's financial strength is its funded ratio, which compares plan assets to accrued pension liabilities. A funded ratio of 100% indicates that a plan has sufficient assets to cover financial obligations, while lower percentages indicate underfunding. Reviews are based on the CPS team's assessments at the time this report was compiled (third quarter 2026) and are intended to measure each plan's progress and challenges relative to its own journey toward long-term sustainability. Future reports will reflect the outcomes of any actions or changes made to improve sustainability. Please note that all dollar values are in U.S. dollars, unless otherwise noted.

The Lithuania Pension Plan is not included as a separate section in this report. The plan currently has only one active participant and no retirees or beneficiaries receiving pension payments. Given the plan's size and funds available to cover future benefits, it was determined that conducting an actuarial valuation or external audit at this time would not be a prudent use of financial resources. Wespath will continue to monitor the plan and assess the need for additional review.

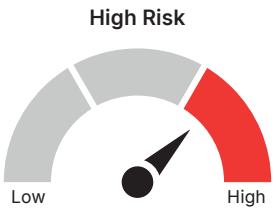
For comparison purposes, this review includes a chart plotting the relative sustainability risk versus approximate size of each plan in total number of participants and beneficiaries. The risk factor of the plan is indicated by color.

Pension Plans Relative Comparison

Sustainability and Plan Size



East Angola
Overall Plan Risk Summary



Plan Funding and Financial Status | Funded Ratio: 3.3%

- East Angola pensions remain severely underfunded, with assets of less than $30,000 against nearly $890,000 in accrued pension liabilities.
- Insufficient contributions continue to be a significant financial weakness. Church contributions, which should equal 10% of pastors' compensation, have been minimal to nonexistent. Clergy contributions of 4% have generally been limited to deductions from clergy salary support provided by the Mountain Sky Annual Conference and one of its predecessors, the Yellowstone Annual Conference.
    - In earlier years, East Angola periodically invested modest amounts (likely derived from clergy salary support deductions) into its Wespath pension account, but the last deposit into this account was in 2017. Current plan assets consist largely of those earlier deposits and related investment earnings.
- The East Angola plan is not able to pay current pensions at the level prescribed in the Angola pension plan. Total pension obligations significantly exceed funding provided through Wespath's CPS program, and the conference does not have sufficient resources to make up the difference. If the plan's only consistent income (deductions from the Mountain Sky salary support) is used to cover the shortfall needed to pay current pensions, those funds will not be available to provide assets for paying future benefits for the pastors whose pay provided those deductions.
- Pensioners currently receive the same pension amount regardless of years of service. For example, a retiree with fewer than 10 years of service receives the same pension as a retiree with 40 years of service. A future plan design change that prorates pension amounts based on years of service could reduce long-term liabilities and represent a meaningful step toward improved sustainability.



Revs. Pedro and Benvinda João

Reverends Pedro and Benvinda João
(East Angola, Southern Africa Regional Conference)

When Rev. Pedro João and his wife Rev. Benvinda were ordained in 1977, the East Angola Episcopal Area was newly 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, while Pedro served as administrative director of the conference. Pedro also served as director of Quessua Mission, which provides infrastructure in agriculture, health, nutrition, education and community development. Thanks to the CPS program, the couple can continue to support their community in new ways.

East Angola Overall Plan Risk Summary (continued)

Plan Management, Administration and Compliance

- A recent audit identified a number of weaknesses, including the need for a more functional and engaged Board of Pensions; underdeveloped internal controls, including the absence of financial policies, regular bank reconciliations and structured accounting records; incomplete or inconsistent financial records; and deficiencies in participant data management, including incomplete or outdated active pastor records, missing retiree and beneficiary documentation and ineffective procedures for validating beneficiary eligibility.
- The audit also noted discrepancies between reported and actual payments, differences between internal records and bank data, and insufficient documentation and tracking related to use of the CPS administration grant and overall pension office operating expenditures.
- Wespath appreciates the prior benefits officer continuing to handle quarterly payments to pensioners for an extended period after he was employed full-time by the Angola judicial system and his request for appointment of a successor benefits officer went unfulfilled. With the election of a new episcopal leader and the appointment of a new benefits officer, the CPS team is eager to work with and support this new leadership and looks forward to improvements in plan administration and progress on the audit issues identified.
- Few, if any, East Angola pastors currently participate in Angola's government pension system, the Instituto Nacional de Segurança Social (INSS), which requires minimum contributions based on a salary level that significantly exceeds the compensation of most East Angola clergy. However, conference leadership has expressed interest in the INSS-administered program as a potentially more sustainable and adequate long-term option than the current Angola UMC plan. Although the minimum required contributions would present financial challenges, Wespath encourages continued exploration of this possibility, ideally in coordination with the West Angola Episcopal Area, where similar exploration is already underway.

Regina Bernardo Samuel

(East Angola, Southern Africa Regional Conference)

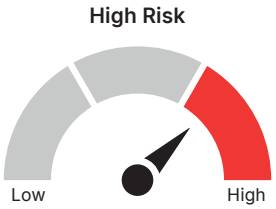
Regina Bernardo Samuel welcomed Wespath with the words "Where there is unity, there is joy in the house." After losing her husband (a United Methodist pastor) to a tragic car accident in 1997, Regina continues to live with gratitude and resilience. At 75, Regina feels blessed to be surrounded by her 10 children and 15 grandchildren. After carefully building her home over many years, Regina is grateful for the pension she receives through the CPS program, which makes it possible for her to live with dignity and financial security.



Regina Bernardo Samuel



West Angola
Overall Plan Risk Summary





Plan Funding and Financial Status | Funded Ratio: 1.4%

- West Angola pensions remain drastically underfunded, with the most recent actuarial valuation showing nearly $4.3 million in accrued pension liabilities and only about $58,000 in plan assets. This represents the largest funding gap among all pension plans supported by Wespath's CPS program.
- Required church and clergy contributions are not being collected consistently as prescribed in the Angola pension plan. Even when contributions are collected, low clergy salary levels limit the extent to which they can fund the benefits being earned, contributing to ongoing and increasing underfunding.
- Certain plan design features further strain long-term sustainability. Under the Angola plan, pensioners receive the same pension amount regardless of years of service, resulting in disproportionately high liabilities relative to contributions for participants with shorter service periods. A plan design change that bases pension amounts for future retirees on years of service could reduce long-term liabilities and be a constructive step toward sustainability.
- West Angola is unable to pay current pensions at the level prescribed in the Angola pension plan. Total pension obligations now substantially exceed the funding provided by Wespath's CPS program. Even if all church and clergy contributions were used for current pension payments, the additional funds would still be insufficient to close the gap. Moreover, if current contributions are used to support current pension payments, the plan forgoes assets and investment earnings that will be necessary to fund additional benefits currently being earned.

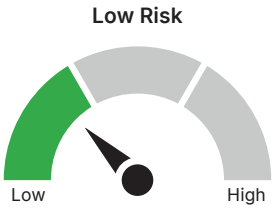


Plan Management, Administration and Compliance *(increased risk from 2024)*

- A recent audit cited shortcomings in accounting and financial systems, financial controls and processes, recordkeeping and participant/beneficiary data management, as well as instances of non-compliant or inadequately documented financial transactions.
- Specific audit concerns included Excel-based accounting records containing errors, inconsistencies and unreconciled transactions; incomplete participant records and inconsistencies among data sources; loans made from pension funds; payments to ineligible individuals; expenditures lacking sufficient documentation; and the commingling of funds from multiple sources within single accounts without clear tracking.
- Despite shortcomings in participant data, the pension officer has made a concerted effort to improve data completeness. Participant information is now more complete than it was several years ago, when many clergy records were missing or incomplete, preventing Wespath and its partners from conducting an actuarial valuation. The pension officer's active pursuit of missing clergy record details made it possible to include West Angola in the most recent valuations.
- Leaders in the West Angola Episcopal Area have been exploring the requirements for clergy and churches to participate in the Angola government pension system, administered by the INSS. This governmental program could provide more adequate and sustainable retirement income for retired clergy and surviving spouses than the CPS-supported plan. Challenges include minimum required contributions tied to a salary level that often significantly exceeds the salaries of United Methodist pastors, as well as the possible need to make retroactive contributions for years in which pastors were not participating. Despite these obstacles, Wespath encourages continued exploration of this option.



Central and Southern Europe Overall Plan Risk Summary

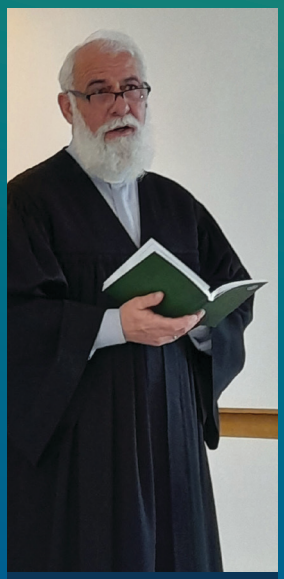


Plan Funding and Financial Status | Funded Ratio: 60.4%

- Based on the most recent actuarial valuation, the plan reports approximately €2.1 million in accrued liabilities and €1.2 million in plan assets, representing a funded status of 60.4%. As this metric reflects benefits earned and assets accumulated to date, continued collection of church and clergy contributions will be important to support the growth of plan assets and meet future pension obligations.
- Cash flow projections over the next 15 years indicate that available assets, together with ongoing funding from the CPS program, are expected to be sufficient to meet projected benefit payment requirements.
- In recent years, Central and Southern Europe leadership has considered potential adjustments to benefit levels. In recognition of the associated cost implications, Wespath's CPS team has been engaged to provide modeling and analysis to assess the overall financial impact and long-term reasonableness of such changes. This collaboration reflects the strong partnership between the episcopal area and Wespath.

Plan Management, Administration and Compliance

- Overall, the administration of the Central and Southern Europe pension plan remains strong, with appropriate oversight in place. The episcopal area ensures that regular audits are conducted by a local firm, with the pension plan included as part of the overall audit scope.
- Wespath values its ongoing partnership with Central and Southern Europe pension leadership, including regular participation of Wespath staff in Board of Pensions meetings, which supports governance, communication and collaboration.



Pastor István Szuhánszky

Pastor István Szuhánszky

(Hungary, Central and Southern Europe Regional Conference)

Pastor István Szuhánszky, 67, devoted 46 years to ministry across five districts in Hungary. Raised in Miskolc in a pastoral family, he felt called to ministry at a young age. Inspired by his father's example, he began serving the church early, eventually becoming a third-generation pastor.

His ministry began under communist rule, when churches were closely monitored and pastoral work was restricted. Despite these challenges, Szuhánszky and his community remained focused on their mission, hosting youth gatherings and nurturing faith in creative ways. "You have nothing else to do but save as many people as you can!" he shared, reflecting on the guidance that carried him through decades of service.

Following the fall of communism, new opportunities opened. Szuhánszky expanded his ministry to schools, prisons and retirement homes, reaching across communities with renewed freedom.

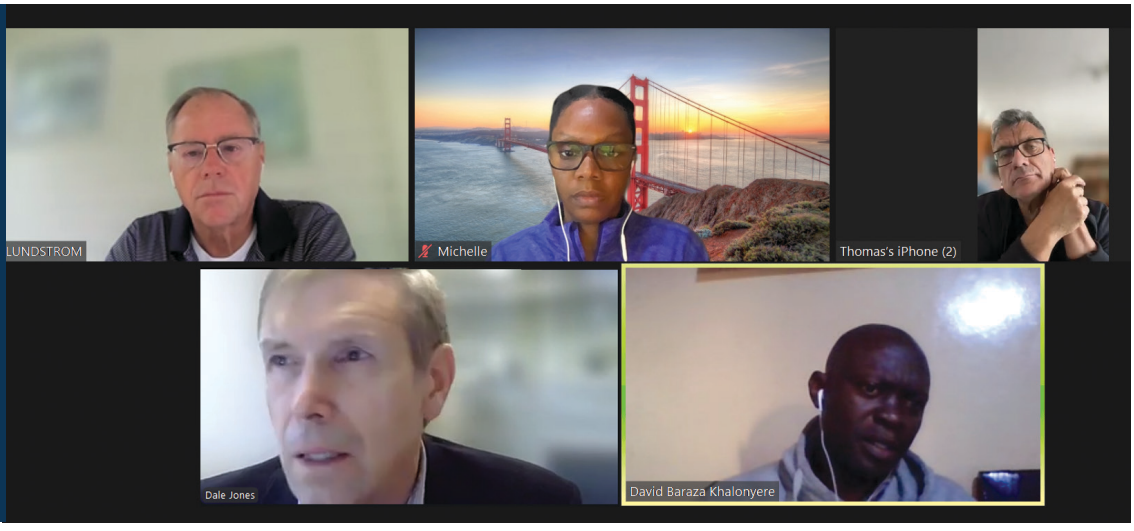
Now retired, he and his wife enjoy time with their family, particularly their grandchildren. He remains active in his church and is grateful for the CPS pension support that contributes to his financial stability in this new chapter.

East Africa Overview



The East Africa pension plan was initially established in 2012 by the East Africa Annual Conference, which has since expanded into the four conferences that now comprise the East Africa Regional Conference. By the time the plan became operational in 2018, it included all current annual conferences. With the regional conference now consisting of two episcopal areas, consideration of dividing the existing plan into two separate plans—one for the Burundi-Rwanda Episcopal Area and one for the East Africa Episcopal Area (Kenya-Ethiopia and Uganda-South Sudan)—may be appropriate. Plan details for each conference are provided in the sections that follow. The following features apply to the East Africa plan overall:

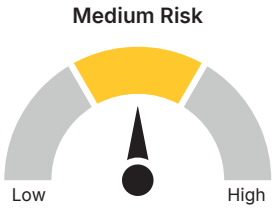
- All East Africa pensioners receive payments electronically through bank accounts or other financial institutions, such as savings and credit cooperatives. Funds from the CPS program are wired to pension plan accounts for each conference and then transferred to individual pensioner accounts, with a slightly different process in place for Uganda-South Sudan.
- To date, CPS funds have covered all pension payments across the East Africa plan. No maximum CPS funding levels have been established, either for the plan overall or for individual conferences, unlike most other CPS-supported plans. Since benefit payments began in 2018, the number of pensioners and therefore total pension payments has increased significantly in several conferences, largely due to identifying additional retirees and establishing payment mechanisms. CPS will need to establish maximum funding levels for each conference, as the program does not have the capacity to sustain continually increasing pension obligations.
- Pension contributions are set at 5% of compensation from both the church and the clergyperson, except in the Kenya-Ethiopia Annual Conference, where the rate is 6% for each party. Pension benefits are uniform across all conferences, despite significant differences in average compensation levels. As a result, contribution income (even with full collection) is insufficient to cover the cost of benefits being accrued.



The CPS team on a virtual call with David Baraza Khalonyere, pension officer for the Kenya-Ethiopia Annual Conference.



Burundi
Overall Plan Risk Summary





Plan Funding and Financial Status | Funded Ratio: 4.5%

- Burundi pensions remain materially underfunded, with plan assets of approximately $85,000 compared to nearly $1.9 million in accrued pension liabilities, based on the most recent actuarial valuation.
- Notable increases in contributions have been reported following the Burundi-Rwanda bishop's emphasis across the conference on strengthening support for the pension program.
- Despite relatively strong participation in church and clergy contributions and CPS funding covering all pension payments to date, the financial outlook indicates a need to consider reducing future benefit levels, increasing contribution income or other funding sources, or implementing a combination of these measures.
- Since early 2023, the Burundi pension program has periodically deposited contributions into its Wespath investment account.

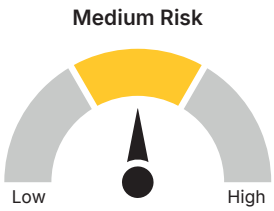


Plan Management, Administration and Compliance

- The pension officer has demonstrated consistent diligence in plan administration and adherence to plan provisions, including accurate application of eligibility rules and benefit calculations. Continued support from the Board of Pensions will be important in sustaining this level of effective administration.
- The pension officer maintains regular communication with the CPS team, seeking clarification when needed to ensure proper interpretation and consistent application of plan provisions.
- Participant data for active clergy, retirees and surviving spouses is generally complete and up to date, reflecting the pension officer's strong attention to detail in recordkeeping.



Kenya–Ethiopia
Overall Plan Risk Summary





Plan Funding and Financial Status | Funded Ratio: 2.8%

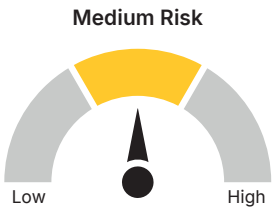
- Kenya–Ethiopia pensions are severely underfunded, with assets of less than $17,000 and accrued pension liabilities approaching $600,000, according to the most recent actuarial valuation.
- Contribution rates of 6% of compensation for both clergy and churches are slightly higher than those of other East Africa conferences; however, even with full compliance, contribution income remains insufficient to cover the cost of benefits being accrued.
- Increased contribution collection efforts by the pension officer in recent years have improved income levels, and contributions have been consistently invested for long-term growth since late 2021. The current funding gap is due in part to low contributions during the plan's early years.
- To improve long-term sustainability, the plan requires increased contributions, reduced benefit levels, additional funding sources, or a combination of these approaches.



Plan Management, Administration and Compliance

- The pension officer demonstrates strong technical capability, including effective use of accounting systems and maintenance of accurate and current records of participant data, contributions and benefit payments. While an external audit report is not currently available, Kenya–Ethiopia is not expected to face many of the accounting and control deficiencies identified in other plans.
- Complete records of clergy contributions enabled the refund of contributions to clergy who exited the UMC, in accordance with plan provisions. The CPS program remitted these funds to the conference, and the pension officer administered the refunds to the respective individuals.
- While returning contributions reduced near-term plan assets and associated earnings, the removal of these individuals from the plan will also reduce long-term liabilities.

Rwanda
Overall Plan Risk Summary



Plan Funding and Financial Status | Funded Ratio: 6.4%

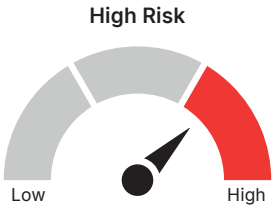
- The most recent actuarial valuation reports plan assets of less than $7,700 compared to approximately $120,000 in accrued pension liabilities.
- The Rwanda pension plan consistently deposited contributions into its Wespath investment account throughout 2023 and 2024. However, government closure of churches has significantly reduced contribution inflows since that time.
- Similar to other East Africa conferences, relatively low clergy compensation levels combined with prescribed pension benefits limit the plan's ability to achieve sustainability. Even if normal church operations resume, long-term viability will require increased contribution income, additional funding sources, reduced benefits, or a combination of these measures.

Plan Management, Administration and Compliance

- The pension program is administered by a capable and conscientious pension officer who, prior to the church closures, actively educated clergy on pension participation and worked to address overdue contributions.
- The program has faced institutional and external challenges, including efforts by a conference legal representative to form a separate denomination, which created complications related to banking and uncertainty regarding clergy affiliation. However, the alternative denomination has not been formally recognized by the government.
- Beginning in the latter half of 2024 and continuing through 2025, the government of Rwanda closed most churches across denominations, significantly curtailing pension-related activity beyond ongoing payments to existing pensioners.



Uganda–South Sudan Overall Plan Risk Summary





Plan Funding and Financial Status | Funded Ratio: 0.2%

- Uganda–South Sudan pensions are extremely underfunded, with assets of less than $2,300 compared to nearly $1.17 million in accrued pension liabilities, based on the most recent actuarial valuation.
- Reported clergy compensation levels are significantly lower than those in other East Africa conferences, resulting in correspondingly lower contribution income. Even with full collection, contributions would be insufficient to cover the cost of benefits being accrued.
- The level of compliance with required contributions is unclear, and it is not fully evident where collected contributions are held. Unlike other conferences in the plan, Uganda–South Sudan has not remitted contributions to its Wespath investment account. The actuarial valuation indicates a low contribution compliance rate of approximately 25%.



Plan Management, Administration and Compliance

- The pension officer has demonstrated commitment to educating clergy about the pension program and encouraging participation, including conducting training sessions for pastors and cabinet members.
- The pension officer has also made efforts to identify eligible retirees and surviving spouses, collect financial account information and initiate pension payments. As a result, the number of pensioners has increased significantly over the life of the plan.
- As with other East Africa conferences, CPS funds have covered all pension payments to date. However, CPS funding cannot continue to meet the needs of a growing pensioner population indefinitely. Achieving long-term sustainability will require increased contributions, additional funding sources, reduced benefit levels or a combination of these measures.
- Due to earlier complications related to government registration and banking, CPS funds for Uganda–South Sudan are currently routed through the Kenya–Ethiopia pension account before being transferred to individual pensioners.

Mid-Africa Overview

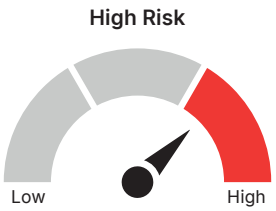


Pensions for the Mid-Africa Regional Conference, formerly the Congo Central Conference, are currently defined within a single plan document originally developed as the Congo pension plan when the central conference consisted of only three episcopal areas, and that document has remained largely unchanged. In practice, however, the pension plan now functions more as a collection of separate plans—one for each episcopal area. Information specific to each episcopal area appears on the following pages, though several considerations apply across the regional conference or to the plan as a whole.

- The plan prescribes the same church and clergy contribution rates for all episcopal areas (5% from the church and 3% from clergy compensation) as well as the same pension benefit formula. However, clergy compensation varies widely among the areas, meaning the resulting contributions differ significantly in their capacity to fund the pension benefits being earned. Wespath believes these compensation differences, along with other regional distinctions, warrant area-specific plan provisions to improve long-term sustainability.
- Some differences have already been incorporated, either in the plan document or in practice. For example, the plan document excluded South Congo licensed local pastors from the outset, and North Katanga has implemented a similar approach. South Congo has also pursued church contributions based on 5% of the overall church budget, rather than 5% of pastor compensation.
- Across the regional conference, pension payments are typically distributed in cash. Where infrastructure and systems can support electronic pension distribution, that approach would likely reduce operating costs, improve security, strengthen recordkeeping and, if desired, allow for more frequent distributions.
- An annual maximum for CPS funding was initially set for the Congo plan as a whole. However, that overall amount was never allocated among the individual episcopal areas. Instead, CPS funding for each area has, to date, equaled the amount of that area's pension payments. As a result, in earlier years when total pension payments across all areas were below the overall maximum, the CPS program retained the difference. In more recent years, however, total pension payments have exceeded the original maximum designated for the Congo plan, yet the episcopal areas have continued to receive the full amounts of their pension payments. Consequently, CPS expenditures now exceed the original maximum established for the Congo pension plan as a whole.
- The CPS program does not have the capacity to continue increasing funding indefinitely. Going forward, CPS will need to establish a maximum pension funding amount for each episcopal area, similar to arrangements already in place for most other CPS-supported pension plans. As a result, some funds for pension payments will likely need to come from each episcopal area.

All but one of the Mid-Africa episcopal areas have new pension officers as of mid-year 2025 or later, with some pension officer turnover as recent as third quarter 2026. The departure of experienced pension officers calls for effective and deliberate transitions and knowledge transfer to the new personnel to avoid additional adverse effects on already-fragile pension programs.

Central Congo
Overall Plan Risk Summary





Plan Funding and Financial Status | Funded Ratio: 3.8%

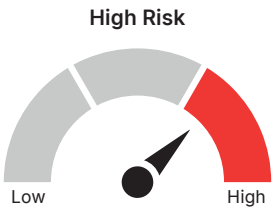
- According to the most recent actuarial valuation, the plan's funded ratio remains extremely low, with approximately $80,000 in assets compared to more than $2 million in accrued pension liabilities.
- Because clergy compensation levels are very low, the required contribution rates of 3% from clergy and 5% from the church generate inadequate income (even if collected in full) to cover the cost of pension benefits currently being earned, and they are far too limited to also amortize the current $2 million underfunding.
- Despite having the lowest reported clergy compensation among the episcopal areas in the regional conference, Central Congo provides the same pension benefit levels as the other areas. In terms of income replacement, the benefit level appears high relative to compensation.
- Achieving long-term financial stability will require increased contributions, additional funding sources, reduced benefit obligations, or some combination of these measures.
- Continued increases in funding from the CPS program have covered pension payments to date, rising from approximately $66,000 to about $86,000 annually over the past decade. However, CPS funding cannot increase indefinitely. Additional funding from the episcopal area will be required, even if pension benefit levels are reduced.



Plan Management, Administration and Compliance *(increased risk from 2024)*

- A recent audit report identified several deficiencies in data quality and participant/beneficiary recordkeeping, accounting systems and financial controls, and the recording of contributions.
- While the audit noted that the pensions team has implemented practical processes for pension distribution and documentation in a difficult operating environment, including verification practices at payment points, it also identified a particularly concerning failure to remove some deceased individuals from pensioner lists. This weakness could further harm the plan's already fragile financial position if benefits are paid to ineligible recipients.
- As in other areas of the regional conference, cash distribution of pensions in Central Congo increases security and misappropriation risks. At present, however, limited technology infrastructure does not support significant use of electronic distribution.

East Congo
Overall Plan Risk Summary





Plan Funding and Financial Status | Funded Ratio: 5.4%

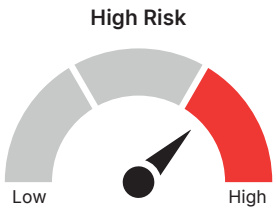
- The most recent actuarial valuation shows severe underfunding, with more than $900,000 in accrued pension liabilities and less than $50,000 in plan assets.
- Based on reported clergy compensation, the required pension contributions of 5% from the church and 3% from pastors, even if fully collected, would not generate sufficient annual income to cover the annual cost of benefits being earned, much less amortize the current underfunding of more than $850,000.
- Funding from the CPS program has increased steadily to cover growth in pension payments, rising from just over $30,000 annually to more than $43,000 over the past ten years. However, CPS funding cannot continue to increase indefinitely. Increased contributions, additional income from other sources, reduced benefits, or some combination of these measures will be required for the plan to move toward sustainability.
- War and violence in parts of East Congo have displaced clergy and disrupted the regular functioning of congregations, reducing the ability of churches and clergy to make required pension contributions and compounding the plan's financial challenges.



Plan Management, Administration and Compliance *(increased risk from 2024)*

- A recent audit report identified significant shortcomings in financial controls, recordkeeping and data integrity, including the lack of an accounting system and audit trail, incomplete participant data, and beneficiary lists that included deceased individuals—findings that were surprising given Wespath's observations in earlier years of comparatively detailed contribution and distribution records, although those records were largely manual or paper-based rather than digital.
- In addition to its financial impact, the disruption and dislocation caused by war and violence also hinder the ability to maintain current and accurate participant and beneficiary records.
- The East Congo Area has recently revised annual conference boundaries to change from three annual conferences to five. Impacts of this change on plan administration are yet to be seen.

North Katanga
Overall Plan Risk Summary





Plan Funding and Financial Status | Funded Ratio: 3.9%

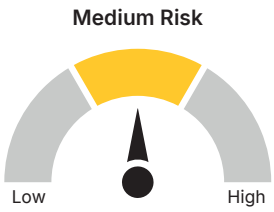
- As of the most recent actuarial valuation, North Katanga pensions remain severely underfunded, with plan assets of approximately $72,000 and accrued liabilities of more than $1.8 million.
- Contributions remain critically low relative to plan needs, with only a small proportion of clergy and churches participating. Audit findings indicate that only about 10% of active clergy are contributing to the pension plan.
- Even if active clergy participation were to improve substantially, relatively low clergy salaries across the episcopal area mean that the prescribed contribution rates of 5% from the church and 3% from clergy would still not generate enough annual income to meet the annual cost of benefits being earned, much less reduce the nearly $1.8 million in underfunding. Without higher contribution rates, additional sources of income, reduced benefits, or some combination of these factors, underfunding will continue to worsen.
- The most recent actuarial valuation and audit were completed prior to the creation of the new Tanganyika Episcopal Area from the former Tanganyika Conference of North Katanga. As a result, some portion of North Katanga's pension liabilities and assets may ultimately transfer to Tanganyika, along with a corresponding share of CPS funding. The final allocation will depend on which active clergy and pensioners become members or residents of conferences within the Tanganyika Episcopal Area.



Plan Management, Administration and Compliance

- A recent audit report identified rudimentary and highly manual accounting systems and financial controls, relying primarily on Excel-based records; the absence of cash management controls and regular bank reconciliations; and incomplete participant recordkeeping, including service and contribution records.
- North Katanga pension personnel have commendably explored mobile money options for pension distribution, which could improve security, reduce risk and strengthen payment recordkeeping. Unfortunately, the remote location of many pensioners, combined with lack of infrastructure and access in many rural areas, has prevented electronic payments from becoming a broadly viable solution.
- Given the extremely low participation rates among active clergy, contribution records sufficient to enforce pension plan provisions regarding credited service are essential. Under the Congo pension plan, clergy do not receive pension credit for periods in which they do not make pension contributions. Accurate contribution records are therefore necessary to calculate the correct pension benefit and to ensure benefits are not being paid for periods in which no pension credit was earned and no contributions were made.
- Ongoing communication between the North Katanga and Tanganyika episcopal areas will be important until all transition matters are resolved. Both areas have new or relatively new pension administration personnel. Increased collaboration and exchange of information between pensions staff in the two areas and with Wespath is needed to fully and accurately delineate the pensioners and active clergy for which each area is responsible.

South Congo
Overall Plan Risk Summary





Plan Funding and Financial Status | Funded Ratio: 12.5%

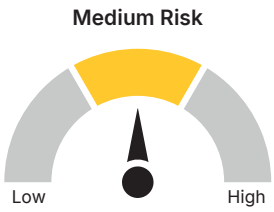
- Pension contribution performance in recent years has been comparatively strong, due in significant part to improved contribution emphasis and collection efforts by the previous area benefits officer and his staff.
- Based on the most recent actuarial valuation, however, the plan remains underfunded, with assets exceeding $240,000 but accrued liabilities of more than $1.9 million. Much of this shortfall is attributable to earlier years, prior to the appointment of the current benefits officer, when contributions were negligible. Despite this significant funding gap, South Congo has a stronger funded ratio than any of the other episcopal areas in the Mid-Africa Regional Conference.
- South Congo's relatively higher funded ratio is due in part to its use of a church contribution formula based on 5% of the overall church budget, which produces a greater contribution than the 5% of pastor compensation required by the Congo pension plan. It is also attributable in part to significantly higher clergy compensation than in the other areas, which results in correspondingly higher clergy contributions, while the pension benefit formula remains the same as in the other areas.
- Despite the stronger contribution performance of recent years, the audit report notes considerable opportunity for improved participation, with only approximately 30% of nearly 800 active pastors consistently making pension contributions.
- CPS funds used to cover pension payments have increased dramatically over the past decade, from just over $46,000 annually to nearly $90,000 today. CPS cannot sustain this pattern of continued increases indefinitely. Additional income, reduced pension benefits, or both will be necessary to sustain pension payments in future years and reduce the current underfunding.



Plan Management, Administration and Compliance *(increased risk from 2024)*

- The audit report commends South Congo for having an established Board of Pensions, which provides an important level of governance and oversight, as well as for a team that includes a finance officer and pension officer who support the area benefits officer and help coordinate contribution collection, benefit administration and reporting.
- At the same time, the audit notes several weaknesses and opportunities for improvement, including limitations in accounting systems and internal financial controls, which remain largely manual and Excel-based; deficiencies in participant data related to service and contributions; and the need for regular bank reconciliations and stronger financial controls.
- Given the low clergy participation rates noted above, clergy contribution records are especially important. Under the Congo pension plan, credited service for pension benefits is granted only for periods in which clergy contributions are made. Thorough contribution records are therefore essential to ensure that no individual receives benefits for periods in which no pension credit was earned.
- The area benefits officer for the last nine years has been appointed to a different position, and a new benefits officer has been appointed. Intentional and thorough transfer of pension plan knowledge and experience and of related processes and controls from the former benefits officer to the newly appointed benefits officer will be important for continued administrative and financial progress and in addressing audit issues and funding needs.

Tanganyika
Overall Plan Risk Summary



Plan Funding and Financial Status | Funded Ratio: N/A

- Tanganyika had not yet been established as a new episcopal area at the time of the most recent actuarial valuation. As a result, Tanganyika-specific actuarial and financial data are not available for this report. Because the area was formerly part of the North Katanga Episcopal Area, Tanganyika's pension plan can initially be expected to have a similar financial profile to North Katanga's.
- As noted in the North Katanga summary, Wespath anticipates that some portion of North Katanga's pension assets and liabilities from the most recent actuarial valuation will transfer to Tanganyika.

Plan Management, Administration and Compliance

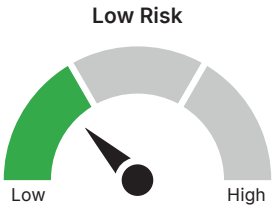
- The Tanganyika Episcopal Area has an area benefits officer as well as a pension officer for each of its two conferences, supported by additional staff. The pension officer was able to attend Wespath's Pensions Forum in late 2025, and the area benefits officer met with the CPS team via Zoom. However, in early September the CPS team learned the area benefits officer and one of the conference benefits officers are no longer in their positions.
- Pension personnel have prepared the area for distribution of pension payments to retirees and surviving spouses living in the Tanganyika Episcopal Area and were working during the first half of 2026 to develop accurate and complete data files for active clergy and pensioners. At the time of finalizing this report, however, and perhaps in part due to the aforementioned staffing changes, getting complete listings of Tanganyika active and retired clergy and surviving spouses remains a challenge.
- A key challenge and opportunity for Tanganyika pension personnel will be significantly improving participation and contribution levels among active clergy beyond the roughly 10% participation rate cited in the North Katanga audit and noted in the North Katanga summary of this report.



(L-R): Wespath's Ross Lundstrom, Michelle Robinson, Marie Londwas (Tanganyika Annual Conference), Thomas Kemper, Joseph Kapoma Kasongo (Tanganyika Annual Conference), and Dale Jones.



Latvia
Overall Plan Risk Summary





Plan Funding and Financial Status | Funded Ratio: 100%

- The Latvia pension plan is one of the smallest within the CPS program, with six active participants and five retirees and surviving spouses. This is reflected in the most recent actuarial valuation, which shows accrued liabilities of slightly less than €100,000.
- The plan is currently fully funded (100%) on an accrued liability basis, which represents the target funding level for CPS-supported plans. Continued contribution collection, appropriate plan provisions and ongoing CPS funding contribute to favorable cash flow projections, indicating sufficient assets to meet pension obligations over the next 15 years and beyond, based on current demographics.



Plan Management, Administration and Compliance

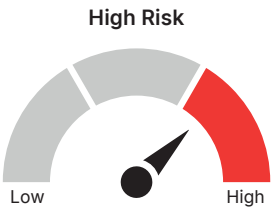
- Wespath was pleased to host representatives from the Latvia UMC at the Pensions Forum in Manila in late 2025. The Pensions Forum provided valuable opportunities for peer learning, allowing Latvia representatives to share their experiences in effective plan management while gaining insights from other regions.
- Latvia keeps most of its pension reserves with Wespath, helping the plan grow assets to cover current and future needs. Tracking assets against liabilities will remain important for the plan's long-term health.
- Members of the CPS team were glad to visit Latvia in August 2026 and participate in their Annual Conference session. The team was warmly welcomed by Bishop Knut Refsdal of the Nordic-Baltic-Ukraine Episcopal Area and conference attendees. In addition to presenting the history of the CPS program and how Wespath collaborates with Latvia and other plan sponsors, Wespath staff participated in the full two-and-a-half-day session. The team also met with key pension leaders to discuss several administrative issues and topics.



Bishop Knut Refsdal of the Nordic-Baltic-Ukraine Episcopal Area (far left) with UMC pastors at the ordination of a new elder and General Conference delegate.



Liberia
Overall Plan Risk Summary





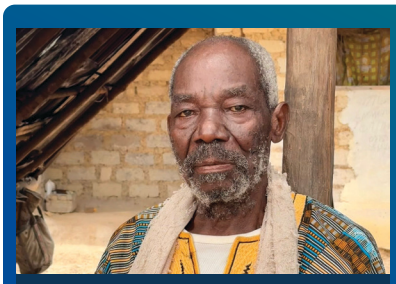
Plan Funding and Financial Status | Funded Ratio: 5.5%

- The Liberia pension plan remains significantly underfunded, with a funded ratio of approximately 5.5% based on the most recent actuarial valuation. Plan assets total approximately $166,000, compared to accrued liabilities of $3.0 million.
- Cash flow projections indicate that existing pension reserves could be depleted within approximately 12 years, resulting in a substantial funding shortfall. While recent plan revisions are intended to improve the long-term financial outlook, contribution collection rates must increase significantly from current levels, which are estimated at approximately 10%.
- The annual conference will need to increase funding for plan administration from internal sources. Currently, a significant portion of CPS-provided funds is used to support salary and pension office operations, limiting the resources available for participant education and other administrative needs.



Plan Management, Administration and Compliance *(lowered risk from 2024)*

- The annual conference approved a revised pension plan at its 2025 session, effective April 1, 2025. Key provisions include clarified eligibility requirements, confirmation that contributions are pooled for the overall benefit of the plan rather than individual accounts, and adjustments to benefit levels on a prospective basis. The revised plan also includes provisions linking service credit to the required 5% contribution, reinforcing the importance of consistent contributions. Effective communication and administration of these provisions will be critical to advancing plan sustainability.
- Significant progress has been made in implementing electronic pension payments through the LoneStar mobile money platform, with approximately 60% of pensioners now established within the system. Continued efforts will be needed to extend access to remaining participants and to monitor usage, particularly among those less familiar with the technology.
- The pension office will need to address the administrative implications of recent clergy transitions at the 2026 Annual Conference session, including the processing of more than 100 departures from the UMC. Clear communication and timely return of eligible contributions will be essential in addressing potential claims and ensuring compliance with plan provisions.



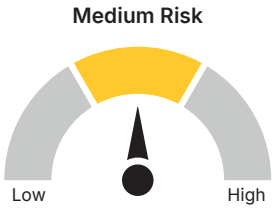
Rev. Peter M. Dogbah

Rev. Peter M. Dogbah
(Liberia, West Africa Regional Conference)

Born July 15, 1922, Rev. Peter M. Dogbah is the oldest CPS pensioner the team has encountered. He and his wife, Kpowan, have lived in the same home for a decade. “And God willing, I will die here,” he shared. A longtime evangelist and pastor, Rev. Dogbah now receives his pension by cellphone and spends retirement tending his orange and avocado trees.



Mozambique
Overall Plan Risk Summary





Plan Funding and Financial Status *(increased risk from 2024)* | Funded Ratio: 15.9%

- The Mozambique pension plan remains significantly underfunded, with an accrued liability funding ratio of 15.9%, based on plan assets of approximately $436,000 and accrued liabilities of approximately $2.3 million.
- While the CPS program continues to provide financial support, improving sustainability will require increased contribution collection, particularly raising church contributions above the current 65% collection rate (the percentage of required pension contributions collected compared to the total amount owed), as well as identifying additional sources of funding to build pension reserves.
- Near-term cash flow projections indicate no expected shortfalls over the next 15 years; however, longer-term projections suggest that plan reserves may be depleted, with the conference needing to fund annual shortfalls in approximately 20 years. Continued emphasis on increasing reserve levels will be important to reduce future financial pressure.
- The annual conference has demonstrated effective stewardship of CPS-provided administrative funds, enabling the accumulation of reserves and investments in operational resources, such as the purchase of a vehicle to support outreach to participants and beneficiaries.
- The Mozambique pension plan is among the most effectively administered within the CPS program. Administrative procedures are well established and generally followed, as confirmed by the most recent audit.

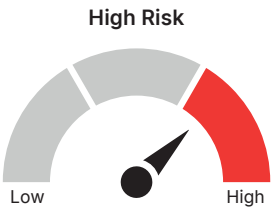


Plan Management, Administration and Compliance

- Wespath benefited from hosting the Mozambique coordinator and finance director at its Glenview office, where discussions focused on pension operations and regional challenges. The visit provided valuable insights for both the Mozambique delegation and Wespath staff.
- The continued use of electronic pension payments remains a significant strength, improving efficiency, reliability and accessibility for participants and beneficiaries.



Nigeria
Overall Plan Risk Summary





Plan Funding and Financial Status | Funded Ratio: N/A

- The Nigeria pension plan remains financially unsustainable. This assessment is based on prior audit findings as well as the inability to complete an actuarial valuation due to challenges in obtaining complete and accurate participant data. While significant work remains, recent leadership and administrative changes provide reason for optimism regarding the plan's future financial and operational improvement.
- A follow-up audit will be important in evaluating progress, as the most recent audit covered the 2022 and early 2023 period under the previous administration.
- The successful implementation of the revised pension plan provisions, consistent collection of required contributions, and identification of additional funding sources will be critical to addressing historical challenges and improving the plan's long-term sustainability.



Plan Management, Administration and Compliance

- Since the publication of the last report in 2024, Nigeria has welcomed a new bishop, who has also appointed new pension officers within each of the five annual conferences. These leadership changes have renewed efforts to establish a more sustainable pension program and have demonstrated a strong commitment to understanding and addressing the plan's longstanding challenges. While substantial work remains, there is clear evidence of a desire to strengthen governance, improve administrative procedures and implement appropriate controls.
- Wespath has appreciated the ongoing collaboration with Nigeria pension plan leadership, including regular monthly virtual meetings focused on advancing plan administration, evaluating challenges and identifying opportunities for improvement.
- Conference leadership has worked diligently to better understand the plan's financial and administrative needs. Efforts have included researching historical contribution records, identifying clergy who have exited the UMC, updating pension plan provisions and strengthening clergy data management and recordkeeping practices.
- The conference has adopted revised pension plan provisions designed to improve long-term sustainability. The updated plan requires mandatory contributions equal to 7.5% of compensation from both active clergy and churches/employers, representing a significant increase from previous contribution requirements. Consistent enforcement of these provisions will be important to improving funding levels and supporting the overall health of the pension plan.



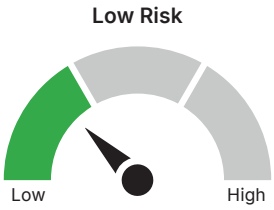
Rev. Jonah T. Madugu (fourth from the right) and other pension beneficiaries meet in December 2025.

Rev. Jonah T. Madugu and Other Pension Beneficiaries
(Nigeria, West Africa Regional Conference)

On Christmas Eve 2025, nine pension beneficiaries in Nigeria received their CPS pension benefits. As bank notifications arrived, recipients responded with gratitude and emotion. Retired Rev. Jonah T. Madugu reflected on the moment: "This is a miracle because we had lost hope."



Philippines
Overall Plan Risk Summary



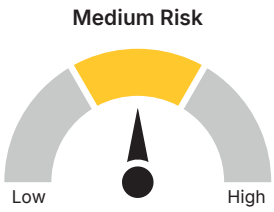
Plan Funding and Financial Status | Funded Ratio: 52.4%

- The Philippines Clergy Retirement and Pension Program (CRPP) remains in a relatively strong financial position, particularly in comparison to several other pension plans in the regional conferences outside the U.S. Cash flow projections indicate no expected shortfalls over the next 15 years, assuming that contributions and funding from the CPS program continue at anticipated levels.
- Plan assets as of the most recent actuarial valuation totaled approximately $3 million, representing 52.4% of accrued liabilities of $5.6 million. This underscores the need for continued disciplined funding and contribution collection. However, when projected future contributions and CPS funding are taken into account, the overall funded ratio rises to nearly 84%, indicating increasingly adequate funding over time.
- Recent changes in asset allocation reflect a tradeoff between capital preservation and long-term return expectations. Adjustments intended to reduce exposure to market volatility may protect against downside risk, but they could also limit the long-term return potential needed to support funding objectives.
- In addition to church and clergy contributions based on compensation, Board of Pensions leadership has developed additional funding streams that have contributed positively to the plan's funded status and overall sustainability.

Plan Management, Administration and Compliance

- The Philippines CRPP is among the better administered and governed pension programs within the regional conferences outside the U.S. An engaged Board of Pensions, strong leadership, particularly from its long-serving chairperson, and capable staff have all contributed to effective plan administration and steady progress in plan management. Past and present episcopal leaders have likewise been active supporters of the pension program.
- The Board of Pensions and its leaders have demonstrated disciplined, sustainability-focused decision-making, exercising prudent oversight by prioritizing long-term financial viability over short-term pressure to increase benefits to potentially unsustainable levels. The plan's one increase in benefits was approved only after careful actuarial and cash flow analysis indicated that it should be sustainable.
- Plan administration is characterized by sound accounting and recordkeeping practices. Despite the plan's size and the large number of active clergy and pensioners, participant data is consistently current and mostly complete. Plan provisions are applied consistently and adhered to, and the Board of Pensions periodically updates plan provisions to respond to changing needs and circumstances.

Sierra Leone
Overall Plan Risk Summary



Plan Funding and Financial Status | Funded Ratio: 1.6%

- The Sierra Leone pension plan has experienced significant financial challenges, in part due to an agreement with the government's National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT) approximately 12 years ago, under which all church and clergy contributions were redirected to NASSIT until participants reach age 60. This arrangement has limited the plan's ability to build pension reserves.
- Based on the most recent actuarial valuation, the plan has accrued liabilities of approximately $979,000 and assets of approximately $15,000, resulting in a funded ratio of 1.6%.
- Cash flow projections indicate that existing reserves and CPS support are already insufficient to meet annual pension obligations, requiring the annual conference to provide additional funding from other sources within the episcopal area.

Plan Management, Administration and Compliance

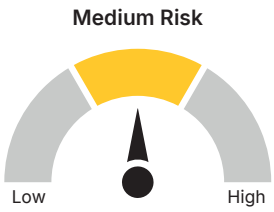
- Following engagement with Wespath beginning in 2021, the plan was modified to require 5% contributions from both clergy and churches in addition to NASSIT participation. Ongoing enforcement of these provisions, along with identification of additional funding sources, will be critical to strengthening financial sustainability.
- Wespath engaged with Sierra Leone pension leadership through participation in the 2025 Pensions Forum in Manila and an onsite visit to Freetown in early 2026, including meetings with the bishop, Board of Pensions representatives and pensioners. These engagements highlighted the importance of establishing a fully functional Board of Pensions and addressing transition challenges from prior leadership. In August 2026, the CPS team was pleased to hear that the Board of Pensions was established and is fully functioning and meeting regularly, with the pension office having been able to resolve much of the prior record issues.
- Conversations with retirees underscored the need for enhanced participant education and communication across the conference, particularly regarding contribution requirements and the relationship between benefits provided by the pension plan and NASSIT.



Wespath staff hold conversations with both pension leaders and recipients of the Sierra Leone Annual Conference in Freetown, Sierra Leone, to strengthen partnerships and broaden understanding of the local pension plan.



South Africa
Overall Plan Risk Summary





Plan Funding and Financial Status | Funded Ratio: 28.4%

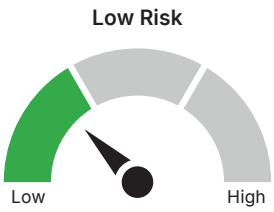
- The most recent actuarial valuation reflects underfunding, with accrued liabilities of nearly $72,000 and just over $20,000 in plan assets. However, cash flow projections indicate no expected shortfalls over the next 15 years, assuming expected investment earnings on existing assets and continuing CPS support at the current level.
- In practice, the South Africa pension plan has been seeking to collect equal fixed monthly contributions of 250 Rand from each church and each clergyperson, rather than the 4% of compensation contributions described in the original plan. We understand this shift away from compensation-based contributions is due to unreliable reporting of pastoral compensation by pastors and congregations, perhaps to minimize pay-based expenses such as pension contributions. Assuming it has been approved through the proper channels, this contribution approach should be formally codified in the South Africa pension plan description, if it has not already been done.
- Due to decreasing participant numbers in what was already a small plan, CPS funds alone (if maintained at the current level) could potentially fund South Africa's pension obligations over the long term, even without church and clergy contributions. This is not the intended design of the CPS program, as all plans supported by CPS are contributory plans with prescribed church and clergy contributions.
- Several pastors and churches in South Africa (largely Zimbabwean congregations typically led by clergy from Zimbabwe) reportedly are not participating in the pension plan. Wespath encourages outreach to bring these groups into the plan. If they are included, plan contribution rates or amounts, benefit formulas and amounts, and possibly CPS funding may all need to be reviewed and adjusted for long-term sustainability.



Plan Management, Administration and Compliance *(increased risk from 2024)*

- The appointment of a new pension officer, together with strong and engaged leadership from the Board of Pensions chairperson, has improved communication with Wespath and made personnel and information more readily accessible. Wespath is grateful for this partnership and looks forward to its continued development.
- As noted above, Wespath encourages outreach to South Africa pastors who are not currently participating in the pension plan. Former Zimbabwe clergy now serving in South Africa are no longer accruing benefits under the Zimbabwe UMC pension plan and may therefore face inadequate retirement income if they remain outside the South Africa plan.
- The new pension officer has inherited several administrative and transitional challenges, including an inactive bank account and difficulties accessing accounting and participant records. The bank account issue has also affected the ability to send CPS funds for pension payments or administrative support.
- In addition the Board of Pensions chairperson has commendably been seeking additional effective members for the Board. A well-functioning Board is important for governance, sustainability and support of the pension officer's work.

Zimbabwe
Overall Plan Risk Summary



Plan Funding and Financial Status | Funded Ratio: 12.6%

- As noted in the 2024 report, the Zimbabwe pension plan is now considered a supplementary plan, with the episcopal area sponsoring a defined contribution plan as its primary retirement program. The pension plan has effectively been frozen, with no new participants entering the plan.
- Wespath, in coordination with Zimbabwe pension leadership, has structured CPS funding to align with annual pension payment obligations. As a result, cash flow projections indicate no expected shortfalls over the next 15 years and beyond.
- As a closed plan, membership will continue to decline over time, reducing long-term liabilities accordingly.

Plan Management, Administration and Compliance

- Zimbabwe leadership has demonstrated strong administrative capability, including leveraging external expertise through Fidelity Life Assurance of Zimbabwe, which supports benefit administration, particularly for the defined contribution plan.
- A significant operational improvement has been the implementation of electronic pension payments, enhancing efficiency and reliability for pensioners and beneficiaries.
- The Zimbabwe Episcopal Area maintains a highly capable and engaged Board of Pensions, with strong expertise across benefits, finance and investments. The Board of Pensions is led by an experienced chairperson and works in close partnership with the pension officer to support sound governance and oversight.



Kwang Lim Chapel at Africa University in Zimbabwe.

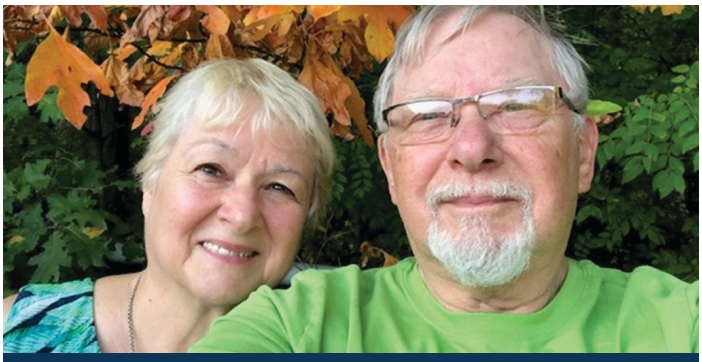
Commitment and Generosity from CPS Donors

The CPS program is sustained by a spirit of generosity that spans the global United Methodist connection. Through the faithful support of individuals and organizations, CPS continues to provide meaningful retirement assistance to clergy and their families across Africa, the Philippines and Europe. Behind every contribution is a story of gratitude, compassion and a deep commitment to caring for those who have served.

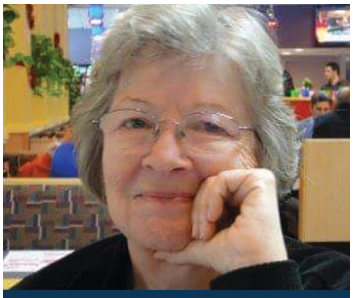
We recently connected with several donors whose lives and ministries reflect that shared calling. Their stories offer a glimpse into the heart behind the generosity that fuels this work.

For Rev. Pete Crawford and his wife, Kay, supporting CPS is simply an extension of the values that have shaped their lives. Rev. Crawford, who spent much of his ministry serving congregations in Michigan, found meaning in meeting others' immediate needs and building relationships across communities. In retirement, that sense of calling continued through hospice chaplaincy, part-time church work and prison ministry.

Kay played a pivotal role in guiding their support of CPS. Grounding her perspective in Scripture, she shared, "If you see a need, don't just offer words—do something about it." Grateful for the stability they've experienced through their own pension and health benefits, the Crawfords see their giving as a way to share those blessings with others. As Rev. Crawford expressed, "We're grateful to be a small part of encouraging those who are doing the hands-on work of ministry around the world."



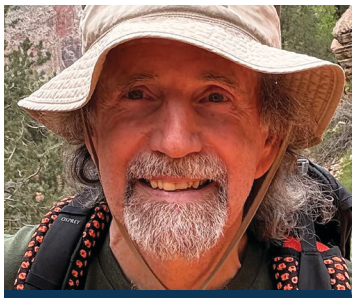
Rev. Pete Crawford and his wife, Kay.



Rev. Carol Tuck

Donor Rev. Carol Tuck's journey to ministry and supporting CPS is rooted in a lifelong commitment to faith, justice and compassionate service. From her early days in Indiana to decades of pastoral leadership in Illinois and New Mexico, her ministry has been defined by presence in both ordinary and extraordinary moments: walking with families through crisis, guiding congregations through hardship, and creating space for meaningful connection.

Now in retirement, Rev. Carol remains engaged in her community while extending her generosity globally. For her, supporting CPS is a way to honor the shared realities of ministry across cultures. "Even though our contexts differ, the work is sacred," she shared. "I'm grateful to support you." Her giving reflects a deep sense of solidarity and an acknowledgment that those who serve in different parts of the world are united by a common calling.



Rev. Ben Williams

CPS donor Rev. Ben Williams approaches giving with a similar sense of gratitude and perspective. After 37 years in ministry and years of active retirement, his life continues to center on service, whether preaching and playing music at a local rescue mission, leading Bible studies or supporting his broader community. His global outlook was shaped early through mission work, which opened his understanding of both need and connection across borders.

For Rev. Ben, supporting CPS is closely tied to an awareness of circumstance. That recognition has led him to give intentionally, both from his retirement income and, more recently, by exploring ways to contribute through investment growth.

At its core, he sees his giving as a tangible expression of care: “I hope those receiving support know they are not forgotten, that their service is valued.” In his words, donors can reflect “the heart of God” by making that care visible.

These donors represent just a few of the many individuals whose generosity strengthens the CPS program. Together, they illustrate a powerful truth: when the UMC connection unites in shared purpose, it creates lasting impact far beyond geographic boundaries.

Consider Donating to CPS

Through continued generosity, CPS remains not only a source of financial support, but an expression of gratitude, connection and hope, ensuring that those who have faithfully served are cared for, wherever their ministry has taken them.



“We are so grateful for the CPS program. It helps bring food to our table. Without it, we'd go hungry.”

- Marcelina Luciano, East Angola, Southern Africa Regional Conference

Click here or scan the QR code to learn more.

Looking to the Future

The CPS program continues to support the financial needs of those who serve around the world, while embodying the spirit of global ministry and connection within the UMC. Through forums, in-person visits and ongoing engagement, the Wespath and CPS teams have deepened their understanding of the diverse challenges faced across regions and is better positioned to respond thoughtfully to evolving needs. The program’s continued success depends on its ability to adapt to changing conditions in pension management and compliance, supported by regular audits, strategic planning and strong collaboration with regional leaders.

Looking ahead, proactive pension plan governance remains essential to sustaining and expanding the CPS’s impact. Wespath’s focus continues to center on strengthening the financial stability of each plan and ensuring that retirees and their beneficiaries receive the benefits they have earned through a lifetime of service.

Several key developments illustrate how CPS is actively shaping the future of pension support across the United Methodist connection:

- **Exploration of re-establishing pension support in Ukraine.** Wespath has initiated conversations with United Methodist leadership regarding pathways to rebuild a pension program following Ukraine’s transfer to the Nordic-Baltic Episcopal Area and the end of Ukrainian participation in the Eurasia pension plan. The ongoing war and resulting disruptions have brought additional complexity to this effort. In collaboration with episcopal leadership in Northern Europe and leaders within Ukraine, Wespath is exploring sustainable approaches to restoring this essential support. Beyond its financial dimension, this work reflects a

broader commitment to standing alongside clergy and church workers in times of crisis and recovery.

- **Continued transition toward electronic pension payments across Africa and other regions.** The adoption of digital platforms, including mobile money, is improving the reliability, security and transparency of benefit distribution. These systems not only enhance administrative efficiency but also help ensure that pensioners (often in remote or underserved areas) can access their benefits more consistently and with greater dignity.
- **A growing opportunity to connect clergy and church workers with national government-sponsored pension or social security programs.** In many countries, these systems now offer more stable and sustainable long-term solutions than were previously available when the CPS program first launched. Wespath is actively exploring how conferences might engage with such programs in ways that complement or enhance existing pension arrangements. These efforts reflect an ongoing commitment to identifying the most effective and sustainable means of providing retirement support for those who have faithfully served.

As CPS continues to evolve, these developments underscore a broader principle: sustaining pension programs requires both innovation and collaboration. By remaining open to new approaches and responsive to changing circumstances, Wespath and its partners are working to strengthen the long-term outlook for pension plans across the global connection. As we navigate these changes, Wespath remains committed to providing regular updates to the UMC community through written communications, including general news, a semi-annual CPS newsletter, direct plan summary recaps for plan sponsors (including bishops, pension officers and other key pension leaders in the area) and the biennial report on the overall status of the CPS program.

As we look to the future, Wespath's commitment to the well-being of those it serves remains steadfast. With the continued support of the United Methodist community and the leadership of regional conferences, the CPS program is well positioned to navigate future challenges and remain a vital source of support for clergy and their families around the world.



Rev. Oleg Starodubets, district superintendent for the Ukraine-Moldova Provisional Annual Conference, during a virtual meeting with the CPS team.



Throughout Africa mobile money is being promoted and signs like these can be seen throughout the region.



Wespath's Ross Lundstrom, Frederick Hyland and Thomas Kemper (CPS consultant) attend the Board of Pensions meeting in Liberia in March 2026.

Wespath

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