



# North Carolina Conference

The United Methodist Church

July 22, 2021

## **PARTNERS IN CARING**

Rev. Duke Lackey  
President

Rev. Charles Michael Smith  
Vice President

Rev. Gary Allred  
Secretary/Treasurer

## **PHONE**

For Billing Inquiries:  
919-779-6115 Ext 316

For Other Inquiries:  
919-801-0157

## **WEB**

[nccpartners.org](http://nccpartners.org)

## **EMAIL**

[pic@nccumc.org](mailto:pic@nccumc.org)

Dear North Carolina Conference Partners in Caring Members,

Grace and peace to you. As your Board of Trustees, we have some very important information for you in this letter about the future of Partners in Caring.

## **OUR HISTORY**

In 1937, the clergy of the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, saw a need to assist the families of recently deceased clergy to pay for funeral expenses. They started what was then known as the Brotherhood Ministry, which later became the Brotherhood/Sisterhood and eventually Partners in Caring (PIC).

When PIC began, the government had not yet disbursed the first Social Security beneficiary check and the annual conference did not yet provide life insurance. Also at that time, our clergy did not benefit from the vigorous retirement program with which we are now blessed. As the relative costs of funerals increased, PIC met an important need. Over our eighty-four-year history we have provided a death benefit to over 600 families.

## **CURRENT SITUATION**

During the spring of this year, the PIC Board of Trustees studied the current financial position and membership demographics of our program and drew the unanimous conclusion that the ministry is no longer sustainable.

Here are some of the findings:

- As of the date of this letter, PIC has approximately \$192,000 on hand.
- There are currently 357 beneficiary members in PIC.
- The amount of each call to members is \$20, excluding those among our most elderly members who pay \$15 per call.
- The amount paid to beneficiaries upon the death of a member is \$7,000.
- When a death occurs, and all members pay their call, a total of \$6,905 is generated.
- We do not have a sufficient number of younger members to be financially sustainable.
  - 23% of our members are 75 and older
  - 39% of our members are 65-74 years old
  - 27% of our members are 55-64 years old
  - Only 10% are under 55 (4% are under 45)

Young clergy simply do not join PIC in the numbers that their predecessors did. Over the last five years, there have been 37 calls and only 25 new members.

The Board has determined that this problematic trend is becoming *exponentially* greater as time goes on, due to the high average age of our membership. With every call, there is one less member to pay for future calls.

Therefore, the Board of Trustees voted on May 3, 2021, to move toward the dissolution of PIC, to disperse its assets to the members, and to discontinue this ministry. The decision was reached with great prayer and discernment.

On July 12, 2021, the Board voted to disburse all assets held by PIC to the membership according to the following formula (ages are calculated as of July 31, 2021):

- 90 years and older will receive one-half of current benefit
- After this disbursement, the remaining total assets will be disbursed according to the age groups as follows:
  - 80-89 will receive 40%, equally divided among members
  - 70-79 will receive 30%, equally divided among members
  - 60-69 will receive 20%, equally divided among members
  - Up to 59 will receive 10%, equally divided among members
- Any member who has paid future calls in advance at the time of distribution will be paid their percentage benefit plus their credit balance.
- Any member who is delinquent at the time of distribution will be paid their percentage benefit less the amount they are in arrears.
- No calls will be issued on deaths occurring after July 31, 2021.
- Members' distributions will be mailed as soon as possible after July 31, following payment of all outstanding commitments of the program.

While we would much prefer to keep PIC in operation, we cannot ignore the facts and trends as outlined above. We all must remember that PIC was founded as a ministry to help families of colleagues during bereavement and adjustment after a death when there were not other means of doing so (life insurance, pensions, Minister's Transition Fund, etc.). A Questions and Answers document regarding this transition has been posted online at the PIC website ([www.nccpartners.org](http://www.nccpartners.org)). A printed copy can be mailed upon request to [pic@nccumc.org](mailto:pic@nccumc.org) or 919-801-0157.

Though it brings us great sorrow to discontinue this ministry, we give thanks to God for the eighty-four years of compassionate care to countless family members of clergy in the North Carolina Conference.

In Christ,



Bill Braswell

Gayla Collins











