



**Minnesota**  
**Annual Conference**  
of the United Methodist Church

## **2021 FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS**

### **Minnesota Annual Conference and Foundation**

**The following grant is sponsored and funded by the Dakotas-Minnesota Area of the United Methodist Church's Ministerial Excellence Fund awarded with support from Lilly Endowment.**

#### **[Investing In Leaders Well-Being Resource Grant](#)**

The Investing in Leaders debt reduction grant has combined with the Board of Ordained Ministry's MEF Grant for Seminary Debt Reduction (from both Annual Conferences) to expand the opportunity for clergy from the Dakotas and Minnesota Annual Conferences to improve their financial well-being. The grant now offers up to \$5000 per year for up to five years (a total of \$25,000) to reduce education debt and connects clergy to the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to achieve financial health goals.

**The following grants and scholarships are sponsored and funded by the Board of Ordained Ministry and the Ministerial Education Fund (MEF). For more information and to apply, visit [clergy grants](#) or [clergy forms](#).**

#### **MEF Grants for Seminary Debt Reduction Assistance**

Grants to reduce educational debt are now combined into a single application and process which can be accessed through the Investing in Leaders Well-Being Resource Grant (see above). The criteria and grant parameters can be found within the expanded Investing in Leaders Well-Being Resource Grant guidelines.

#### **MEF Grants for Continuing Education Course or Event**

Clergy may apply for grants up to \$700 each quadrennium for continuing education courses or events. This support is intended to supplement, but not replace, local budgets supporting clergy continuing education. For purposes of administration of Ministerial Education Fund grants, where applicable, a quadrennium shall run January 1 through December 31 consistent with the budgeting and reporting calendar for these funds.

#### **MEF Grants for Course of Study**

Licensed local pastors in full or part time appointments in the Minnesota Annual Conference may apply for a grant of \$400 for each course in the Course of Study to assist with registration fee, tuition, and room and board. Applications for MEF grants for Course of Study may be made at the time costs will be incurred, such as at the time of registration, or following completion of a course.

#### **MEF Grants for Doctorate of Ministry Studies**

Clergy may apply for up to two grants of \$1,000 each in separate years while they are enrolled in a Doctorate program supporting the call to ministry.

### **MEF Grants for Licensing School**

Certified candidates and certified lay ministers in the Minnesota Annual Conference may apply for a grant for reimbursement of the cost of licensing school registration and tuition fees. One half of the expenses for books will be reimbursed. Transportation expenses are not reimbursable. Applications for MEF grants for Licensing School may be made at the time costs will be incurred, such as at the time of registration, or following completion of the school.

### **MEF Seminary Scholarship**

Seminary scholarships are available once a year for any person who has begun the candidacy process in the Minnesota Annual Conference up to a maximum of three full-time scholarships. Full time annual scholarships are given in the amounts of

- \$5,000 for a student attending a United Methodist seminary; or
- \$3,000 for a student attending an approved seminary outside the boundaries of Minnesota; or
- \$2,000 for a student attending an approved seminary within Minnesota.

### **MEF Grants for Formational and Spiritual Growth Leave**

Up to \$1500 is available to clergy who request a formational and spiritual growth leave for fees and other expenses for courses and events related to formation and spiritual growth. Clergy must be under appointment for at least six years to be eligible and continue to hold an appointment during the leave (up to six months).

### **MEF Grants to Churches During Approved Clergy Leave**

Grants are available to churches from the Ministerial Education Fund for pulpit supply or the most important need of the church community during approved clergy leaves for:

1. Formational and Spiritual Growth Clergy may apply for a grant up to \$100.00 per week *for the period of the approved leave* to each of their appointed church(es).
2. Continuing Education and Spiritual Growth: Clergy may apply for a grant up to \$100.00 per week *for a maximum of four weeks* to each of their appointed church(es).

The purpose of these grants is to assist churches in supporting clergy leaves that exceed normal annual budgeting for pulpit supply during, for example, clergy vacations. Applications for Grants to Churches for clergy services must be accompanied by a copy of the approved clergy leave application.

Grant applications are normally reviewed monthly by the Board of Ordained Ministry. Once approved, payments are typically processed within one week. Grants for pulpit supply are paid directly to churches.

### **Spiritual Direction and Coaching Financial Assistance**

This program provides financial assistance to clergy and their spouses who are seeking spiritual direction and/or coaching from professional/certified directors or coaches. The program allows payment up to 50 percent of the cost of a session with a maximum payment of \$40 per session. There is a \$300 limit per individual per year or \$1200 per quadrennium. There is a limit of 12 sessions per year.

### **Counseling Resources and Financial Aid**

Clergy who have exhausted their health benefits for counseling services for themselves or any family member who is on their health plan, may apply for additional financial support for up to \$1000 per individual per calendar year. The financial aid may be applied to half the cost of the insurance deductible, or half of the cost of 12 counseling hours, not to exceed \$65 hour.

**The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry sponsors 70 scholarship programs using one general application under the categories of:**

- **General Scholarships**
- **Racial-Ethnic Specific Scholarships**
- **Ministry as a Career Scholarship**
- **Doctorate-Level Scholarship**

**[Find more information about these scholarships and apply.](#) Criteria for each scholarship program vary; however, there are minimum requirements that apply for general eligibility consideration. The Excellence in Clergy Leadership Scholarship (below) can be found under “Ministry as a Career Scholarship.”**

### **Excellence in Clergy Leadership Scholarship**

Designated for the fulltime, MDIV student enrolled at one of the 13 UM seminaries/schools of theology, enrolled as pursuing certified candidacy or certified candidate for ministry (elder or deacon), with demonstrated merit, progress, and commitment in the candidacy process. Applicants should demonstrate financial need and show how this scholarship will help avoid additional student loans. Applicants will receive and must participate in assistance from a financial counselor from the EY Financial Planning Center. Award amounts vary from \$2500 to \$7,500.

**The following scholarship is sponsored by the Minnesota United Methodist Foundation and the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation.**

### **Dollars for Scholars Scholarship**

The Minnesota United Methodist Foundation (MNUMF) has joined the Dollars for Scholars program with the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation (UMHEF) to provide scholarship aid for United Methodist students from Minnesota who attend United Methodist-related schools, colleges, universities and seminaries in the United States. Under the program, UMHEF will provide a \$1,000 matching scholarship when the student’s local church raises \$1,000 to assist them in attending a UM-related school. In addition, the UM school and the MN United Methodist Foundation also will provide matching \$1,000 scholarships, for a total award of \$4,000.

**The following scholarship is sponsored by the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation.**

### **Named Endowed Scholarships**

The United Methodist Higher Education Foundation (UMHEF) General Application is used for a number of named scholarship funds established by various donors. Some of the funds stipulate that applicants meet certain eligibility criteria, i.e., resident of specific conference, majoring in specified field, etc. Scholarship fund descriptions are available at [www.umhef.org](http://www.umhef.org). Applicants will be considered for all scholarships they

qualify for, but are eligible to receive only one award per year from UMHEF funds. Renewal applicants must submit a new application each year.

**The following scholarships or grants are not sponsored by the Minnesota Annual Conference or a United Methodist organization. This information is provided as additional sources of scholarships and grants to look into. Read each description for information on how to apply.**

**Eastern Star Training Award for Religious Leadership (ESTARL)**

The ESTARL scholarship is for individuals preparing for careers in religious leadership in any denomination. Individuals need to reside in Minnesota for at least one year and be a part-time or full-time student. The individual must demonstrate membership at a church. The scholarship(s) may not exceed more than \$10,000. Scholarship awards are for tuition only. Application, recommendation, and transcripts are required by the Feb. 15 deadline. For more information, contact Judy Putnam, Chairperson, at [jmputnam@q.com](mailto:jmputnam@q.com) or 651-653-5077.

**Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program**

Offered by the Center of Pastoral Excellence at Christian Theological Seminary. Congregations can apply for grants of up to \$50,000 each to support a renewal program for their pastor. Pastors will be considered eligible if they are ordained, currently serving in a ministerial role within a local congregation, in good standing with the Minnesota Conference, and have shown a commitment to education.

Updated 2/2021