



Michigan Conference

The United Methodist Church
Benefits Office

Michigan Conference Center North

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To: Michigan Conference Clergy/Local Church Officers/Congregations

Date: March 27, 2020

Re: Benefits Ministry Shares Payment Holiday **ADDENDUM**

Since the initial release of the Benefits Ministry Shares Holiday notice yesterday, additional questions are arriving at the benefits office. The following are responses for clarification and sharing:

- 1) What do Benefits Ministry Shares pay for? Regarding benefits, Benefits Ministry Shares provide the conference (employer) funding for clergy/conference staff pension contributions as well as disability/death welfare plan premiums. These expenses will continue to be paid in full during the holiday period. The only change is that they will be paid for through the Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits reserve fund and the local church will not be billed for these expenses.

The conference benefits office will cease to bill/send the monthly Benefits Ministry Shares statement to each local church for the months of April-September 2020. For reference, see the annual BMS amount as indicated on Line 27 of the 2020 Clergy or DSA compensation recommendation form.

- 2) Does the BMS Holiday include health insurance premiums? No. Churches that are currently receiving a monthly health insurance statement will continue to receive a statement and will be responsible for remitting applicable health insurance premiums and/or waiver contributions.
- 3) Does the BMS Holiday include common budget ministry shares? No. Churches will continue to receive a monthly statement from the conference treasurer's office for ministry shares related to the conference common budget which are separate from the Benefits Ministry Shares.
- 4) Does the BMS Holiday affect UMPIP clergy contributions? No. Wespath Benefits & Investments will continue to send monthly statements for personal UMPIP contributions withheld from clergy/employee payroll and remitted directly to Wespath.
- 5) Will clergy receive no/decreased contributions in their retirement plan over the next six months due to the BMS Holiday? No. As previously stated, all conference contributions will continue to be remitted in full and uninterrupted.
- 6) Will the BMS Holiday deplete reserves and jeopardize future benefits or increase future local church liabilities as a result of the holiday? As addressed in the initial notice, the CBOPHB took great care to assess the level of financial assistance available through the reserve fund that could safely be utilized while limiting the potential risk of future adverse consequences. Per actuarial valuation, the amount designated for the six month holiday was deemed appropriate. If the entire financial sky were to completely fall in between now and September, the BMS Holiday along with every financial element of the annual conference would need to be reconsidered and reassessed. On the other side, the hope is that the BMS Holiday will provide temporary relief to the local church during this period of financial disruption in anticipation of a coming recovery.

Rev Donald J Emmert
Director of Conference Benefits & HR

Disclaimer: No participants or local churches were harmed during the making of this BMS Holiday.