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Dear Friends in Christ,

As a new Christian year begins and we wait together for the coming of our savior, the Committee on Ministers and Congregations wishes to thank you for your faithful service to your church, your community, and the greater Kingdom of God.

Soon churches across Albany Presbytery will gather at annual meetings, where the pastor's terms of call will be discussed and approved. In some circles, benefits are deemed elective or discretionary. That may be the way of the marketplace, but it should not be the way of the Church of Jesus Christ. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) regards compensation and benefits as a matter of justice, and vows to justly compensate those who do kingdom work.

We encourage you to explore the issue of compensation and benefits as they are put forth in a document prepared by the Board of Pensions. *Living by the Gospel: A Guide to Structuring Ministers' Terms of Call* was authorized by the 223rd General Assembly and becomes effective January 1, 2020.

Living by the Gospel lays out ways in which the Church supports the well-being of ministers through the Board of Pensions. It presents the theology that shapes the plan, details the benefits, programs, and assistance that are available through Pastor's Participation, explores issues such as gender equity, shows the investment the Board makes in smaller congregations, and explores the interconnected elements of the Benefits Plan and the Assistance Program. It also includes data that shows how benefits for clergy affect the long-term vitality of ministry throughout the denomination.

The reports in *Living by the Gospel* can inspire meaningful conversation as the Church undergoes reform. The Church lives out its identity as a just, caring community when it supports its ministers with benefits. This also enables them to devote their best gifts to leading God's people.

To learn more about the plan and its importance to the greater church, please go to:

<http://www.pensions.org/our-role-and-purpose/the-connectional-church/living-by-the-gospel>

Peace and Shalom,

Ruling Elder Meg Knight, for the Committee on Ministers and Congregations

Michael Burkley
Moderator

Judy Hartley
Vice-Moderator

Bill Henderson
Temporary Presbyter

H. Daniel Rogers
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