



You Made a Difference

NIC Pension Initiative



"Difference Makers"

FAQ's regarding the "You Made a Difference" Board of Pension initiative:

Q. Where did this initiative originate? A. This initiative started with the passage (with a 95% affirmative vote) of document 680.02 presented by the NIC Board of Pensions and Health Benefits at the 2021 virtual fall annual conference session of the Northern Illinois Conference. Now it is being implemented within the NIC.

Q. What was the primary motivation to start this initiative? A. The primary motivation was to provide place for both laypersons and clergy of the the churches of the Northern Illinois Conference to tell stories to recognize and honor those church leaders that have made a difference in their lives.

Q. Can I honor the person who was my youth minister many years ago? A. Yes. The initial intent of this initiative was to honor our ordained clergy, both elders and deacons. This remains the primary focus. However, we have recognized that the pool of potential honorees is broader and includes local pastors, DS supply pastors, and local church youth pastors. We encourage you to honor anyone who has been a pastor to you, inspiring you to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. You may honor those that are serving currently or have retired. It may be someone from your past as well as your present. It may be someone in Northern Illinois or someplace else. It may even be someone who has gone onto glory!

Q. So... how do I participate? I have someone I'd like to honor; how do I do that? A. Go to this web address, www.umcnic.org/differencemakers. Once there you will find instructions regarding how to name your "difference maker," tell the story of how this person made a difference for you, and make a donation to recognize this "difference maker."

Q. Do I have to use the web to do this? Are there paper forms I can fill out and can I send a check to make my donation? A. Absolutely. You can download a form on the website that you can use to tell your story and then mail it to that address provided on the form. It will then be entered online by a volunteer from the Board of Pensions.

Q. What is the amount of the donation requested to participate? Is a donation required to participate? A. The suggested gift to honor a "difference maker" is \$100. Gifts of less or more than this can be made. You will know what amount is right for you. A donation is not required to participate. If you are unable to make a donation at this time, your story is still welcome and appreciated.

Q. Where does the donation made to this initiative go? A. All funds raised through this initiative will be reserved exclusively for future clergy retirement benefit program payments.

Q. Can I honor more than one person? A. Absolutely! We hope that you will. Each time you participate you will honor one person. You will need to come back to the web pages and tell a story and make a donation each time you participate. We hope that you will come back to name a new "difference maker" periodically-once a year, twice a year, once a month, whatever seems to work for you.

Q. How can those in our local churches be encouraged to participate? A. You can download an information sheet from the website and copy this sheet to hand out to those in your local church.

Q. Does that mean the funds available for clergy retirement benefits are not adequate so that more funds are needed? A. Our clergy pension benefits are provided through a partnership with Wespath that manages the funds and pays the pension benefits to our retired clergy. However, the Northern Illinois Conference is responsible for funding these pension benefits. At the present time the funds available are adequate to provide for our clergy pension benefits. However, there are enough uncertainties related to investment risk and longevity of life to believe that it is possible that at some point in the future the Northern Illinois Conference may be required to supplement those funds that have already been made. Funds through this initiative will provide at least a “down-payment” when this future need is required.

Q. Will I be able to see the stories that have been told through this initiative? A. Yes. On the web pages of this initiative that you can find here, www.umcnic.org/differencemakers, you will be able to read the stories submitted by clicking on the “honored difference makers” tab. The list of names will appear alphabetically. When you click on the person’s name, a pdf file of the story will appear. You may download that pdf and share with others. Check back as stories will be added as they come in.

Q. When a “difference maker” has been named through this initiative, will this person be notified that this honor has been given? A. Yes. A member of the Board of Pensions will monitor the recognitions that have been made, and notify each named person via a phone call, email, or letter. Of course, this notification cannot be done if we have no way of contacting the honoree.