



Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference

An area conference of
Mennonite Church USA

PO Box 301036
Portland, OR 97294
Tel: 888-492-4216
www.pnmc.org

November 1, 2016

Dear Pastors and Congregational Leaders,

Everence recently received money from the Lilly Endowment to help pastors facing financial struggles remain in ministry. Everence is spending the endowment money in several ways but this letter concerns only the Pastoral Finance Assistance Program—the most direct and highest dollar value program which can provide pastors with debt relief of up to \$6000.

The Pastoral Finance Assistance Program is a matching grant, with Everence matching up to \$300 of contributions a pastor receives from other sources. However, the PNMC board realized that many pastors who could use the funds would not feel comfortable soliciting donations from their congregations for personal expenses. At its last meeting the PNMC board agreed to two actions to help conference pastors access the Everence funds.

First, **PNMC is providing a guaranteed minimum payment.** Every pastor with eligible expenses who applies will receive \$300 from PNMC. This ensures that pastors who take the time to complete the grant request form will be compensated regardless of matching funds and Everence's grant decision. (If you are a pastor with debt, please fill out the form!)

Second, **PNMC is creating a common pool of funds** to be distributed to applicants from our conference **and is soliciting donations from churches and individuals** for the pool.

- Churches are invited to send donations to individual pastors or the common pool.
- Individuals and families must choose more carefully: tax law is clear that donations given to a non-profit organization (such as PNMC) but earmarked for the benefit of a specific individual (even a deserving one) are not tax-deductible. However, donations to a common pool of funds are tax-deductible. Individuals are invited to make a tax-deductible donation to the PNMC common pool or a non-tax-deductible donation to specific pastors.

What do you need to do?

- Ensure your church is informed. Here's a sample bulletin announcement: "Everence Financial recently created a matching grant program to help pastors in our denomination with financial need. Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference has created a fund to provide pastors with matching dollars. You are invited to make a tax-deductible contribution to the shared fund."
 - Consider making a congregational contribution to the shared fund.
 - If you're also a pastor with student, medical, or credit card debt, be sure to apply—you're guaranteed at least \$300! Please contact the PNMC office if you need translation help to complete the application. Submissions are due to the PNMC office by December 8.
 - See the attached flyers for more information.

If you have any questions about the program please contact me at treasurer@pnmc.org.

In Christ,
Brett Tieszen, PNMC Treasurer