

## All Together!

n 2021, the Maine Conference utilized their Strengthen the Church Offering funds to create Clergy Pandemic Renewal (CPR) Grants as one way to combat the growing levels of burnout experienced by clergy. Between offering front-line spiritual care and leading their communities through massive adaptive change, our clergy were reporting deeply worrying levels of exhaustion and overwhelm.

Recent research by Drs. Emily and Amelia Nagoski found seven effective strategies for helping people process stress and move back into health: physical activity, breathwork, deep connection with friends and loved ones, belly laughter, crying, affectionate touch, and creative expression. Strengthen the Church funds enabled the Maine Conference to offer grants of up to \$800 per authorized minister to fund proposals for activities

corresponding to those seven strategies. Since the launch of our CPR grant program, 28 clergy have received funds for travel, retreats, therapeutic massage, exercise equipment, gym memberships, coaching, therapy, art supplies, and even an electric drum set.

Strengthen the Church funds made it possible for the Maine Conference to equip our clergy with the necessary tools to process the pandemic's pervasive emotional, spiritual, and physical fatigue. As one clergy member recently reflected, "The CPR Grant from the Maine Conference came along at the time when I needed it the most...this grant allowed me to take time just for me to tend to my mind, body, and soul. My renewal retreat funded by this grant gave me critical space for clarity and deep discernment."

The Strengthen the Church Offering supports the efforts of our conferences and the national ministries of the United Church of Christ to support leaders, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. Together, we all grow stronger.

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Main Conference

United Church of Christ

Gifts to the Strengthen the Church Offering Renew the United Church of Christ.





