



PRESS RELEASE

CONTACT

Debbie Wibowo
Marketing & Communications Associate
debbie.wibowo@ucfunds.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UCF Announces Open Application Season for Brown Endowment Scholarships Gwendolyn V. Kirkland Appointed as New Endowment Administrator

New York, November 19, 2021 – United Church Funds (UCF) announced today that the Helen and Richard Brown Endowment for Pastoral Scholarships will begin accepting applications for the 2022-2023 academic year beginning on December 1, 2021.

The Brown Endowment derives from a generous gift received in the 1990s, designated to support pastoral ministry in the United Church Christ (UCC). UCF serves as trustee of the endowment, helping to ensure funding for pastoral education and development. Since its inception, the initial gift of \$5 million now provides over \$300,000 annually to UCC Conferences, seminaries and global partners, providing individual scholarships for seminarians, grants for continuing education for authorized ministers and support for seminarians in UCC/Disciples global partner churches.

The endowment provides funding for students seeking a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree or equivalent. Potential Brown Scholars must demonstrate at least a year of active membership in a UCC church and maintain a GPA of at least 3.0. Eligible candidates can apply to become a Brown Scholar for the coming academic year by submitting an online application at www.ucfunds.org/brown-scholarship/. The submission deadline is March 1, 2022.

UCF also announced the appointment of Rev. Gwendolyn V. Kirkland as the new administrator of the Brown Endowment, following the departure of Rev. Nelson Murphy, who served in the role for nearly 20 years.

Charles Buck, UCF President & CEO, said: "Nelson has done a tremendous job, and we are sorry to see him go, but grateful for the fact that he continues to serve the church through interim ministry. UCF owes him our gratitude, as do dozens of Brown scholars over the years who received scholarships under his oversight. We are delighted to have Gwendolyn stepping in as administrator. She is exceptionally qualified and knows our program well."

Rev. Kirkland is a former UCF board member, as well as a former member of its Investment Committee. She is a Certified Financial Planner and General Securities Principal and is the former Managing Principal of Kirkland, Turnbo & Associates. She currently serves as Associate Pastor of Stewardship at Covenant United Church of Christ (UCC) in South Holland, Illinois. Rev. Kirkland has contributed articles and been quoted in national publications, including *Essence*, *Money Magazine* and *Ebony*.

“Through the scholarship funding of the Brown Endowment, seminarians preparing for ministry in the UCC can answer the ‘call’ on their lives,” Rev. Kirkland said. “I am delighted to be a part of an ongoing change agent, like the Brown Endowment, with a trinity of financial sourcing for seminary education funding, clergy continuing education and global partner initiatives.”

About United Church Funds

United Church Funds (UCF) is the leading provider of socially responsible, values-aligned investment management services to United Church of Christ churches and ministries, as well as all faith-based organizations. We offer customized investment portfolios and prudent investment strategies that provide competitive returns while also reflecting our clients’ values in seeking to achieve a just world. UCF also offers endowment governance consulting, planned giving programs and superior, personalized service from our dedicated Client Services team. To learn more about how UCF can help your church or faith-based organization further its mission while achieving its long-term financial goals, please visit www.ucfunds.org, email us at info@ucfunds.org or call us toll-free at 877-806-4989.