



# Gifts of Grace

## Toward Financial Wellbeing

### 2026 Report to the Synod Assembly

Our Gifts of Grace program enters its tenth year this year with a record of impacting rostered ministers' financial wellbeing having disbursed over \$1 million in targeted areas through three types of grants.

The Medical Grant relieves some of the burden of a medical payment that is weighing down a rostered minister's family. In 2025 we gave out 14 grants of up to \$1,000.

The Education Loan Reduction Grant shortens the time that rostered ministers are paying on the loans incurred on their path toward being a rostered minister. We have heard from rostered ministers who have finished paying off their educational loans now rejoice that they are free to give more or redirect funds to other purposes. In 2025, eleven rostered ministers applied for and received this grant.

The Retirement Readiness Grants assist rostered ministers in saving adequately for retirement. One of the grants the program offers encourages rostered ministers to save more of their personal dollars for retirement. The second grant is aimed at helping those paid below the synod guidelines and those who are in part-time calls by contributing into their retirement accounts. Eighteen (18) grants were given in 2025.

We are grateful for the many sources of funding that supported these grants in 2025: gifts from individuals, congregations and their endowment funds, congregation WELCAs, conferences, the synod endowment funds for pension equity and retirement readiness, and the Lilly Endowment Phase III grant. Thank you, SW MN Synod, for your continued commitment to the financial wellbeing of your rostered ministers; this ministry your gifts support is making an impact in the rostered ministers' families today and will do so also in the future for retired rostered ministers.

We share appreciation we have received from two grant recipients:

*Throughout seminary and much of my first call, I was unable to contribute much, if any, to my retirement due to the large amount of student loans I carried to answer this call to serve. Now my student loans are paid in full (thanks to Gifts of Grace!) I can make larger contributions and this grant helps me catch up after many years of limited contributions. Thank you!*

*This grant is a lifeline; it relieves some of the financial pressure of my Student Loans: of which I am deeply grateful. Due to financial constraints, my family is only able to afford the minimum monthly payment. With your additional assistance the life of our remaining educational debt is reduced significantly. With the reduction of this debt, investing in our children's future education and our local ministry can become more impactful. This grant means a great deal to me. Thank you.*

In Christ's service,

Pastor Andrew Hermodson-Olsen  
Gifts of Grace Director