



General Board of **CHURCH & SOCIETY** of The United Methodist Church

New investment fund alternative

Equities Social Values Plus Fund will add screening criteria

April 08, 2014

GLENVIEW, Ill. —The board of directors of the General Board of Pension & Health Benefits (GBPHB) has created a new investment fund: the Equities Social Values Plus Fund (ESVPF), an alternative for investors who prefer additional screening criteria compared to other GBPHB funds. The additional criteria will focus on unsustainable human-rights and/or environmental practices.

The new fund, available Jan. 1, 2015, replaces the Balanced Social Values Plus Fund..

The new fund, available Jan. 1, 2015, replaces the Balanced Social Values Plus Fund.

ESVPF will hold U.S. and international stocks. It applies the same six screens as GBPHB's other funds by excluding from investment companies that provide products or services that inherently conflict with United Methodist Church values as outlined in the Social Principles.

New fund option

GBPHB is providing this new fund option to individuals and United Methodist-affiliated institutions that wish to apply additional criteria in an effort to avoid investing in companies that may profit from what some view as egregious environmental and/or human rights policies and practices.

GBPHB will continue ... collaborating with its socially responsible investment partners to advocate for change by promoting more sustainable business policies and practices aligned with United Methodist Church values.

GBPHB will continue with its successful engagement program in all other funds by collaborating with its socially responsible investment partners to advocate for change by promoting more sustainable business policies and practices aligned with United Methodist Church values.

MSCI ESG Research, an internationally recognized expert in evaluating corporate environmental, social and governance policies and practices, will identify companies that ESVPF will exclude from investment because of their unsustainable environmental and/or human-rights records.

Northern Trust Investments will manage the new fund as an index fund based on indices developed exclusively for GBPHB by MSCI ESG Research.

Investment plans

The fund will be available to participants in GBPHB's defined contribution (DC) plans who are able to self-direct their investments. The DC plans available are:

- United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP),
- Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP-DC),
- Retirement Plan for General Agencies (RPGA), and
- the Horizon 401(k).

The fund will also be available for investment by institutional clients of GBPHB's investments division, Wespath Investment Management.

In the second half of 2014, GBPHB will formally notify participants and Wespath clients of this change and action they must take to invest in the new fund.

The General Board of Pension & Health Benefits does not invest in companies that derive significant revenue from the manufacture and/or sale of alcohol, tobacco, weapons, gambling, pornography, and the management or operation of prison facilities.

Editor's note: The [General Board of Pension & Health Benefits](#) (GBPHB) is a not-for-profit administrative agency of The United Methodist Church. It is responsible for the general supervision and administration of the retirement, health and welfare benefit plans, programs and funds for more than 91,000 clergy and lay employees of the denomination.

GBPHB is the largest faith-based pension fund in the United States and ranks among the top 100 pension funds in the country. As a socially responsible investor, GBPHB is actively involved in shareholder advocacy, proxy voting, portfolio screening and community investing.