

SERVANT SOLUTIONS NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2025



Servant Solutions
YOUR RETIREMENT & FINANCIAL PLANNING PARTNER



COMPENSATING MINISTERS WITH CARE

NATE BOWERS, DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL EDUCATION

Caring for those who lead our congregations is one of the church's most sacred responsibilities. Compensation is more than a paycheck. It reflects how we value our pastors and their families. At Servant Solutions, our mission is to walk alongside church leaders with clarity, compassion, and integrity as they shape compensation and benefits plans that honor those who serve.

Clarity That Builds Trust

The foundation of effective compensation planning is clarity. A common point of confusion is the distinction between the Cost of Ministry and the Cost of a Minister:

- **Cost of Ministry** includes expenses such as continuing education, mileage, and other ministry-related costs. These should be reimbursed through an Accountable Reimbursement Plan (ARP), as they do not result in personal financial gain.
- **Cost of a Minister** encompasses salary, housing allowance, and employee benefits.

Keeping these categories separate leads to sound decisions, transparent budgets, and demonstrates genuine care for both the ministry and the minister.

[continued on page 3](#)



(800) 844-8983



info@servantsolutions.org



servantsolutions.org



Jim O'Bold

A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

MARKETS, ONIONS, AND BAD BREATH...OH MY!

I love onions on a sandwich! However, my wife has a prize-winner of a “smeller” and never misses the opportunity when I arrive home and give her my typical

hug and kiss to say, “You had onions for lunch today, didn’t you?” Guilty as charged! Did you know the market can have bad breath as well?

We have enjoyed a good run in the market in 2025, and for that matter, the better part of the last decade. That is encouraging for all our retirement account balances! However, many may be tempted to ignore a sobering fact as we head into the final quarter of the year and into 2026: *the market breathes, and that is healthy!* Do not be surprised if you see some shifts or drops in the months ahead. Markets inhale and exhale...and sometimes that results in some negative (*onion breath*) returns. And history has proven that this rhythm is completely normal and expected.

Does this mean you should “time the market” in anticipation of this eventuality? Far from it! Timing the market’s ups and downs has caused heartache for many investors. Any investment that offers a return has risks. But what is important, no matter the intermediate gains or losses, is that the investment steadily rises over time to meet your goals. We stick by our mantra that “time in the market” is much more important than “timing the market”.

When markets move, successful investors tend to keep three perspectives in view:

1. Hold resources with an open hand.

Over the last several decades, investors have experienced more than a few rough patches. Many of our members found peace by trusting God when headlines were unsettling. None of us can predict short-term moves. Historically, balances have recovered over time, then continued to grow as the market does its work.

2. Maintain a long-term perspective.

It is tempting to check your account often or make quick changes after a big market day. With retirement accounts, the best course is usually no action. Markets rise and fall for many reasons, and very few have lasting impact. Let time and discipline do the heavy lifting.

3. Align investments with your goals and timeline.

If retirement is far away, a higher stock allocation often makes sense. If you need funds sooner, bonds and cash can play a larger role. Our LifeFunds offer a simple, diversified way to match your portfolio to your time horizon and risk level. Our trusted investment partner, Ronald Blue Trust, reinforces this same principles-based approach. If you would like help choosing an allocation, our team is glad to talk.

At Servant Solutions, we want you to feel confident rather than anxious. Economic uncertainty is certain, but it doesn’t mean you cannot be prepared on a strategic, emotional, and spiritual level. The perspectives above can make the difference in bringing you peace among chaos when it comes to market volatility.

Most of all, we are grateful to serve alongside you as we serve our Savior. No matter what the market is doing, we hold fast to this truth:

“But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 Corinthians 15:57

James M. O'Bold



COMPENSATION, continued from page 1

Keys to Compassionate Compensation

A solid compensation plan provides security and peace of mind. It should include three essential components:

- **Retirement** – Participation in the Servant Solutions Retirement Plan (*a 403(b)(9) plan*) with matching contributions encourages pastors to save and helps ensure financial stability and freedom in the future.
- **SECA Offset** – Ministers are responsible for the full 15.3% Social Security (SECA) tax. Including an offset in their compensation helps ease this burden and reflects compassionate care.
- **Proper Classification** – In most cases, pastors should be classified as W-2 employees. This avoids complications and enables pre-tax retirement contributions.

A Story of Proactive Care

Compassion isn't just about numbers. It's also about noticing and responding to real needs. Rev. Dr. Chuck Myricks shares a moment from his early days in ministry:

"I met with my board chair for lunch. We didn't know each other well yet, and neither of us realized we had parked side by side.

When we came out, he walked to his higher-end car and noticed the duct tape holding my windshield together. With kindness, he said, 'You're going to be leading funerals. We'd rather it not be with duct tape.'

That simple remark opened the door to a conversation about providing a car allowance. More than the dollars, it showed genuine care, and I've always been grateful for that. That small act said: We see you, and we care."



Stewardship That Strengthens Ministry

Compensation planning is a form of stewardship. It's how congregations honor and express their value for those God has entrusted to lead. It's also an investment in the health of both the ministry and the minister. Servant Solutions offers free resources, including a Compensation Planning booklet, CHURCHEXCEL access through **ECFA**, and personalized guidance for boards. Together, we can provide the clarity and care pastors need to continue serving the Church with strength and hope for the future.

NEW DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL WELLNESS

We are excited to introduce **Rev. Dr. Mike Snyder**, who has recently joined Servant Solutions as our **Financial Wellness Coordinator** on a part-time basis. In this role, Mike will walk alongside both new and current members to strengthen financial practices such as budgeting and goal setting. His heart is to help members pursue true financial freedom, supported by encouragement, professional care, and pastoral insight.

Mike has been a Servant Solutions member for 20 years and was part of the ministry leadership team that commissioned the original Financial Toolkit, written by Dr. Jerry Fox. His passion for financial wellness is rooted in his own experience leading from a ministry budget and encouraging others to build

confidence in their personal financial journey.

In addition to his financial work, Mike has faithfully served Church of God congregations since 2004 and currently pastors The Church at Broadway Park in Alexandria, IN. He also shares his love of music as an adjunct professor in the music department at Anderson University.

We are thrilled to have Mike on our team and look forward to the wisdom and care he will bring to our members!



Rev. Dr. Mike Snyder



HOW'S YOUR SPARE TIRE?

Dr. Jerry Fox, CFP® A friend of mine recently had a flat tire on her way to work. “No problem,” she thought. “I’ve changed a tire before.” She pulled to a safe spot and opened the trunk, only to discover that her brand-new car didn’t come with a spare tire or jack! She called for help and eventually got back on the road, but solving her problem took more time and money than expected, and it ruined her day. Buying the optional spare would have been far less costly.

As we meet with Servant Solutions members for financial reviews and retirement planning (*a free service for anyone with an account*), we often find the same problem: many are “driving without a spare” in their financial lives. By “spare,” I mean the protection of a life insurance plan for themselves and, if married, also their spouse.

Think about it. You can budget well, save and invest, and make steady retirement contributions. But if you die before those goals are fully funded, what happens to your family? Could they stay in the home? How would the bills be paid? Could the kids still go to college?

Life insurance is not about you. It’s about protecting the people who depend on you. The most important reasons to have life insurance include:

- *Providing for children until they are educated and independent*
- *Income assistance for a non-working or lower-income spouse*

- *Paying off your mortgage, student loans, and other debts*
- *Covering final medical and burial costs*

Life insurance may seem complicated or expensive, but the basics are simple and often surprisingly affordable, especially if you start young. A healthy person in their mid-twenties will pay roughly half the cost of a forty-year-old for the same policy. Even if you start later, you still need that “spare tire.” Shop around, because prices can vary significantly.

The type of policy you choose also affects cost. While whole life or “cash value” plans fit some situations, term life insurance generally provides much more coverage for less money, especially when you’re younger. The money saved with a term policy can be redirected to your retirement plan or other investments. As those grow, your need for life insurance decreases over time.

Please understand our hearts in sharing this. **Servant Solutions does not sell life insurance.** Our calling is to provide retirement plans and financial education for servants of the church. We take seriously Paul’s counsel in 1 Timothy 5:8: *“Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”*

If someone you love is counting on you and your income, protect them well. Find a trusted life insurance agent, evaluate your needs, and shop carefully for the right coverage at a price you can afford.

Prepared by Dr. Jerry Fox, Director of Financial Planning, and Aidan Shoemaker, Financial Planning Intern, Anderson University

FINANCIAL CALCULATORS AVAILABLE

At Servant Solutions, we believe every step toward financial clarity helps you serve with strength today and in the future. That’s why we offer 10 free financial calculators in the Learning Center of our website. These practical tools guide you in planning, saving, and stewarding well.

A few examples:

Roth vs. Traditional 403(b): See which contribution option best fits your retirement goals.

Retirement Planner: Estimate how much you’ll need and create a savings plan.

Investment Savings & Distributions: Project how long your resources may last once you begin withdrawing.

Mortgage Calculator: Calculate monthly payments and schedules.

Home Budget Analysis: Understand where your money is going and how much you can save.

You’ll also find calculators for Social Security planning, debt payoff, required minimum distributions, life expectancy, and comparing investment fees.

These tools are designed to give you clarity and confidence in your financial journey so you can keep making a Kingdom impact with hope, not uncertainty.

