



How Firm a Foundation

*When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.*

In June and July, record rainfalls caused devastating flooding that left many people homeless and congregations without church buildings. These have been called thousand-year flood events, which means it is unlikely that any of us would experience such flooding in our lifetimes, yet our area experienced two such events.

As the waters ebbed, first responders were already on site providing for emergency needs—food, clothing, and shelter. Donations of cash and supplies began to pour in from all over the United States. The United Methodist Church was a big presence almost immediately through UMCOR and our West Virginia Conference disaster team. When there is a need, help arrives from many sources.

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Recovery efforts at Wallback United Methodist Church

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Endowments: If you build it, they will come

One of the famous scenes in the 1989 motion picture, *Field of Dreams*, is when Iowa corn farmer, Ray Kinsella, is convinced to plow his cornfield to build a baseball field after he hears a voice saying, “if you build it, they will come.” As Ray acts on that vision, he is criticized by friends and family who warn that he will go bankrupt without his corn. The movie ends with hundreds of cars approaching the field, proving Ray’s clear vision.

Sometimes, churches struggle with the idea of whether to create an endowment fund. And endowment fund is put in place to fund future ministries; sometimes, church leaders are so concerned with this year’s budget, they fear an endowment fund would “compete” with regular tithes and offerings.

Actually, we have found that a well-planned endowment fund and an environment of creative, planned giving will provide an income stream that will ease the burden on the annual budget. The ongoing budgeted ministries of the church and endowment funds are supported through different funding sources. Church members make their weekly and monthly offerings and pledges

out of their income—wages, salaries, social security, retirement, etc. On the other hand, endowment funds are generated and grown through planned giving—giving that comes primarily from accumulated resources rather than income. Planned gifts are most often made through bequests (gifts from an estate established by a will or trust), life insurance, real or personal property, appreciated securities or gifts with a component lifetime income for the donor. The vehicle for a planned gift varies depending on the needs of the donor.

We recently met with a church that was considering starting an endowment fund. Some of the above concerns were expressed, but after some deliberation, the church decided in favor of opening an endowment fund at the United Methodist Foundation.

Within a week after they made the decision, we received notification from an attorney that he was working with a church member who wanted to make a legacy gift from her estate to the endowment fund. With baseball fields and endowment funds: if you build it, they will come!

Consider the possibilities. ☺





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How Firm a Foundation

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Of course, the first focus was on the safety and comfort of individuals and families who have suffered loss. But what of the many churches who have lost their space? Who would help them?

Fortunately, over forty years ago, leaders in our Annual Conference cast a vision that would provide sustaining support. In the years since, faithful United Methodists have given generously, and the United Methodist Foundation of West Virginia, Inc. reached the point where it could respond to needs such as this. In August, the Board of Trustees committed to granting up to \$300,000 from our reserves to help churches rebuild from the flooding.

The affected churches that have received funding have seen the grants not only as financial help, but as God's grace affirming their ministry in affected communities. Their gratitude has been overflowing, as these representative expressions of thanksgiving show:

Thank you for your generous gift in support of (our church's) flood disaster. There is a lot of work to be done and thru the grace of God, we will accomplish this task. We hope you will pray for us as we continue God's ministry. We appreciate your support. Thank you.

...thank you for working so hard to help us put things back together. We greatly appreciate you...God bless!

It is great to be in a position to offer churches some financial help when the need arises; it is so much more wonderful to be seen as a conduit of God's grace during times of deep water. ☹



Clendenin United Methodist Church immediately following the flood

Focus on... IRA Rollovers

Charitable IRA Rollover Provision Made Permanent

Each year since 2006, Congress has allowed certain donors to make a gift through a Charitable IRA Rollover where the IRA administrator makes the distribution directly to a qualified charity, such as the United Methodist Foundation of West Virginia, Inc. Until late last year, the rollover provision has only been enacted at the end of each year, so donors have often had to wait until the end of the year to know whether this helpful tool of planned giving has been an option for them.

The Protecting Americans From Tax Hikes (PATH) Act of 2015 was passed with bipartisan support by Congress and signed into law by President Obama on December 18, 2015. This law makes the Charitable IRA Rollover a permanent option for donors beginning retroactively for 2015. That is, it is permanent until Congress decides to change it again.

Each IRA owner over age 70½ may make a transfer of up to \$100,000 per year to a qualified charity (such as the United Methodist Foundation of West Virginia, Inc.). The transfer is a non-taxable event; it is not reported as income, and there is no charitable contribution deduction. A charitable IRA Rollover may fulfill part or all of your required minimum distribution (RMD).

If you would like to consider the possibilities of a Charitable IRA Rollover, contact your IRA Administrator and The Foundation. ☺

Giving at Christmas

At year-end we often express thanks to God by giving to others. Careful consideration of the form and timing of your charitable gifts can help magnify the impact of your gift on ministry. You may learn that you can make a gift you didn't think was possible.

In order to help you with your year-end gift planning, we have included a Year-End Giving brochure in this newsletter. It contains information about different ways to make a planned gift and considerations about tax benefits that you can explore with your financial advisor. Make gifts by December 31 of this year, and you can experience the joy of giving now, and also receive potential tax benefits.

If you have questions about planned giving at year end, or at any time of the year, please contact us. We will help as you consider the possibilities. ☺



Moving on to Perfection

As United Methodists, it is ingrained into our Wesleyan DNA to understand that we are continually being made perfect in our love of God and for each other. We are moving on to perfection. I doubt Wesley had computer software in mind when he preached about sanctification, but at The Foundation, we are currently moving toward “perfection” as we transition to new accounting database software. We are anticipating a “go live” date for our new iPhi system on December 1, with new services to donors and churches rolling out in 2017.

We are grateful that we will be able to perfect our services to donors and churches in the following ways:

- Improved quarterly statement structure that not only provides summary information, but also details regarding transactions in the accounts.
- Online access to accounts for balance information and statement access.
- Delivery of Quarterly Statements either by mail or via email notification.
- Near daily valuations of accounts (instead of monthly).
- Ability to attach multiple interested parties to accounts and easily to deliver statements to multiple recipients.

Change isn't always easy, so we ask your patience in the next few months as we complete this transition. If you have any questions, as always, please contact us, and we will answer any questions or make any necessary corrections to our system. While our accounting software is changing, our commitment to serving the United Methodists of the West Virginia Annual Conference remains constant. We are here to help you. ☺



Investment Performance

The performance of our four Investment Funds, net of all fees, for the first nine months of 2016 is listed in the table to the right.

Please remember that as your investment objectives change, you should review your investment choices. You can change The Foundation Investment Fund utilized by your Church or Agency by contacting The Foundation.

Call us if you have questions and to discuss the investment choices offered by The Foundation in greater detail. ☺

January 1 - September 30, 2016

	Total Return	Comparative Benchmark
<i>Fund A</i>	3.85%	2.99%
<i>Fund B1</i>	7.40%	6.91%
<i>Fund B2</i>	7.59%	7.13%
<i>Fund B3</i>	9.63%	7.00%

Net of all fees



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Board of Trustees at the Fall, 2016 meeting

Gratitude

The Foundation expresses gratitude to all of our generous donors, partner ministries and friends. Have a blessed Christmas. *Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.* (James 1:17)