

Do you think Wayne Gretzky grew asparagus?

When asked the secret to scoring goals, hockey great Wayne Gretzky famously said, "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take." And the same lesson is learned in the asparagus patch.

My farming friends tell me asparagus is a perennial plant - it comes up each year. But to get started, when you plant asparagus for the first time, you should not harvest it for three years. After that, having been properly established, the sprouts will appear year after year for a recurring and bountiful spring harvest.

So, mistake number one is to harvest the newly planted crop the first or second year. This might provide some immediate meals, but no prospect for long-term food. The incipient crop would be wiped out.

Mistake number two is not to plant the asparagus at all - because three years "is too long to wait," or "seems too far off in the future," or "we want asparagus this year!"

There is a valuable lesson here: three years (or ten years or twenty years) will surely come anyway - whether you plant anything or not. As the Chinese proverb says, the best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago. Of course, the second best time is now.

For those that indeed planted their asparagus three (or more) years ago, and waited, they continue to have a plentiful supply in perpetuity. **Do you see a parallel to your church's own long-term financial stewardship?**

On the one hand, that which we never actually begin will never come to fruition. Churches that have never started a Permanent Endowment Fund, never fund any ministries they dream about or see a need to implement.

Likewise, that which we begin but don't properly steward or don't follow through with won't produce the hoped-for results. Churches that took the step of starting an Endowment Fund but either spent it right away (a symptom of an inadequate set of policies) or let it go dormant by inaction (a symptom of inadequate vision and leadership) have little to show for it and no robust support for needed ministries.

But the churches who have established Permanent Endowments over the years are able to reap a planned harvest each year to fund a variety of ministries: local outreach, camperships, overseas missions, scholarships, and more.

So, in this season of sun and rain and growth, why not become an active "gardener with God"? The sun and the rain are free - and so is the Foundation's "Gardening With God" information. Give the Foundation a call, e-mail us at kumf@kyumc.org or visit our website (see below).

This is a good season to plant some seeds for future harvests.



Does your Estate Plan Need a Makeover?

A good estate plan is like a mirror: it should reflect your values and relationships in their highest, best and most current form.

But right now, many families are experiencing dramatic changes in their financial assets, living arrangements and other life circumstances. Are you one of them?

Simple changes in your life can have a significant impact on your estate plan. Birth of a new child or grandchild? Have you moved? Bought or sold property? Has someone in your life passed away? Has your health changed?

If so, how will those changes affect your legacy? Can you still recognize your best self - and the legacy you want to leave - in your current estate plans?

The Kentucky United Methodist Foundation can help you answer these questions. We have brochures which can help you take the next step in updating or making your wishes known through your estate plan.

There is no time like the present - give us a call today!

We're Moving

Our location may change, but not our commitment to you.
We will be located in Rokeby Hall at First UMC Lexington
(downtown near Mill and Upper Streets).

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DID YOU KNOW...

Your Foundation offers information and assistance with planning effective gifts to advance the ministry of your United Methodist church, agency or other chosen ministry.

Outright Gifts

Made during your lifetime, an outright gift is irrevocable and tax deductible. In most instances, a non-cash gift of appreciated stock has more beneficial tax advantages to the donor than a cash gift.

Life Income Agreements

Life income agreements allow you to make a gift during your lifetime but retain the income generated from your gift for the remainder of your life. Two commonly used options are:

- a Charitable Gift Annuity
- a Charitable Remainder Trust

Life income gift plans offer benefits such as increased income, partial or complete bypass of capital gains, and a significant charitable income tax deduction.

Bequests

A bequest made in your will allows you to plan a gift to become effective at your death that is probably more significant than anything you could have done during your lifetime. Also, it does not jeopardize your financial security because it is done with assets you are no longer depending upon.

Endowments

An endowment is a permanent fund which you can create to fund the ministry or program of your choice in perpetuity. The principal is invested for growth and only the income is released each year.

A permanent endowment is a good way for you to say:

- I believe in the future of my church and its ministries.
- I want to be guided in my stewardship by my belief that all I have is a trust from God.
- I want my legacy to help create a heritage that future generations can continue to celebrate as joyfully as we celebrate our rich heritage today.