

# Sowing for a Future Harvest!

## **Generational Shift:**

Every year greater numbers of the “Greatest Generation” and “Baby Boomers” are leaving our fellowship for a greater promise of things to come. In addition to incredible testimonies of sacrifice and service, they also leave a hole in the annual support of the work of the local church. Finance committees, trustees and staff cope with shrinking budgets while also working harder to reach more and more of the lost or needy. Faced with the reality of an aging church membership, Age Wave experts point to this generational shift increasing more rapidly around 2018 when the rate of deaths in our country is projected to rise sharply.

## **The Dilemma:**

The dilemma for church leaders is to continue “to serve Christ by setting disciples on fire with Spirit-filled, risk-taking love for all God’s children” while increasing budgets meet a continued and dramatic decrease in the faithful contribution base. For the layperson and clergy who possess a vision for their church to continue to be relevant, there seems to be only two options to consider: trim ministry which eventually results in the

decline of the effectiveness of the local church or proactively seek a new funding base. The Virginia United Methodist Foundation is here to assist those churches who are looking to face this dilemma with a strategic planning approach and an effective solution.

## **A Strategic Plan:**

There is a desperate need for churches to re-envision their future with fresh goals for mission and ministry. Such vision is birthed through concerted prayer and holy conferencing – much like a family preparing for a new child in their home. Vision alone may only be wishful thinking if not structured with clear metrics and benchmarks. Vision for tomorrow’s outreach must have a parallel track – resources to make that vision reality.

## **An Effective Solution:**

An initial planning meeting between Foundation staff and church leadership has proven to be an effective planning tool to craft a local church vision for future ministry.

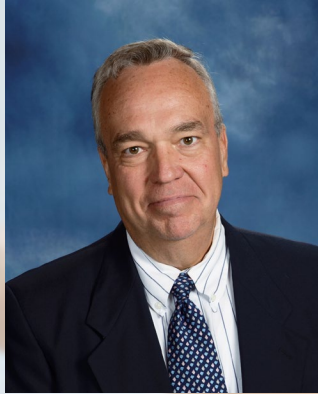
Then, planning for a “Legacy Sunday” at your church with one of the Foundation staff has proven to be helpful to educate and elevate the importance of charitable gift planning in funding the church’s vision. With helpful information like the Foundation’s current focus, an awareness of estate planning is shared with church attendees as individuals not

only think about their own legacy and the impact their gift can have on current and future ministry. Such an emphasis highlights the benefits of planning ahead and creating a comprehensive legacy gift to endow ministry into the future.

## **Sowing for Future Ministry:**

This year will be a significant year of sowing seeds for a future harvest of ministry in the community served by United Methodist churches throughout Virginia. A “Legacy Sunday” can kick off several strategic efforts that will continue throughout the year with announcements in Sunday Schools, bulletin inserts, newsletter testimonials, a workshop, etc. The goal is to help church members envision what their legacy gift can accomplish in continuing the work and ministry near and dear to the individual’s heart.

The Foundation is available to assist churches throughout the conference in variety of ways to meet their dilemma with a very effective solution that will result in not only meeting expanding budgets, but also seen in a harvest of vital ministry that changes lives and touches souls.



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***Our Mission:** The Virginia United Methodist Foundation exists to serve local churches and Conference agencies in their efforts to expand their programs and ministries through planned giving and endowment funds. The Foundation also exists to invest monies for local churches or Conference agencies in accordance with the Socially Responsible Investing principles of the United Methodist Book of Discipline.*



# Sowing for a Future Harvest!

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