

Be a **HERO** Forever

A SHORT GUIDE FOR YOUR CHURCH'S ENDOWMENT FUND COMMITTEE

Congratulations on taking this intentional step to benefit your church! Your efforts will plant seeds that will be harvested “forever!” As the wise saying goes, we enjoy the shade from trees we did not plant. Likewise, we plant trees whose shade we may never enjoy, but your children’s great-grandchildren will. So it is with the permanent endowment fund for your church.



This is a short guide to highlight some of the core functions of your Endowment Fund Committee (the committee). A more detailed discussion can be found in the Planned Giving Marketing Kit on the Iowa United Methodist Foundation website (<https://iumf.org/resources/>).

1) AWARENESS, not Fundraising

The task of your committee is to be an awareness and education committee, not a fundraising committee. You will make sure that information is readily available in several formats to the members of the congregation. Printed formats include short pieces in the newsletter, and a brochure. The Foundation has examples of brochures for your use, you can subscribe to our monthly e-newsletters for articles (<https://iumf.org/connect/>), and check our Facebook page for useful posts that you can share.

Workshops, educational seminars and “Lunch and Learns” are offered by the Foundation on topics such as “Your Will Your Way”, “Renewing Your Endowment”, etc.

2) Questions you may hear

Because you are respected members of your congregation, church members will come to you with questions seeking additional information. You don’t need to be an expert on wills and planned gifts; you simply need to be grateful and encouraging on behalf of the church. We are here to provide assistance to church members as they consider the most appropriate way to include your church in their estate plans.

3) Stewardship of the Fund(s)

Stewardship of gifts involves managing and using the accumulated gifts entrusted to the committee. The purpose is not just to squirrel away money, but to use it to accomplish

greater ministry. Take opportunities to remind the congregation of all the good works that are possible because of these funds.

One important task of the committee is to set policies for what each fund is to be spent on, how much will be spent, and when. The Iowa United Methodist Foundation has sample Spending Policies you can adapt for your church. Stewardship also involves honoring any donor-imposed restrictions on a gift. This is especially important if there was misuse or the perception of misuse of earlier gifts. Of course, the most useful gift has no restrictions.

4) Focus on your long-term legacy

Everyone can consider including a gift to the church in their will, regardless of how much it will be. This is not “all or nothing” where the family receives nothing and the church receives everything.

Simple ways to include a gift to the church in you will are: give 90% to provide for your family and 10% (or a tithe) to provide for the church. Some people choose the give the church a “child share” and include their favorite ministry as an additional child when they divide their assets.

Importantly, everyone needs a will.

5) Remember the Basics

Everyone needs a will. A bequest is a planned gift which every member of your church and committee can make. The most common planned gifts are:

- A gift/bequest in a will (or trust), stock gift, beneficiary or a Pension
- A remainder gifts from a gift annuity or charitable trust (set up during life)
- Endowment fund (created during life or after life, through a will or trust)

6) Some Surprising Information

Most people die without a will (over 60%). While up to 85% of people who come to church give to the weekly offering plate, only 7% of those men and women include a gift to the church in their will.

The work of your committee will help those numbers change for the positive!

