

# THE FOUNDATION

A NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF THE OKLAHOMA UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION



## From the President



At the Foundation, we are fortunate to see the many ways United Methodists faithfully support their church and ministries through their hard earned resources. It is encouraging and rewarding to see people plan today to ensure ministry will continue tomorrow and well into the future. Because of these faithful individuals, scholarships are given, church food pantries are stocked, and mission projects are funded, only to name a few.

There has been some uncertainty with the markets and financial world in recent weeks. On page 2 you will find important investment news. We focus on a long-term, diversified investment strategy, and continue to work hard to keep endowment and investment dollars working for the ministry of our Church.

I hope you make plans to attend Stewardship Focus Day on August 26 in Oklahoma City. The one-day seminar will feature Dr. Clif Christopher, author of *Not Your Parents' Offering Plate*. On pages 4-5, Christopher answers tough questions pastors and church leaders ask regarding giving and finance. He will talk about these questions and more at the seminar.

Thank you for your support of the Foundation. May God bless you.

**Bill Junk, President**

## Profile in Giving: John & Jamie Crooch

# The joy of giving now

John and Jamie Crooch love children. They believe the love and care we pour into children today makes a difference in the kind of people they will be in the future.

John and Jamie play an active role in helping raise their two granddaughters, and John previously volunteered as a chaplain at The Children's Hospital at OU Medical Center in Oklahoma City. John now serves as a board member for United Methodist Circle of Care, the children, youth and family ministry of the Oklahoma United Methodist Conference.

"Through Circle of Care we are able to see the impact they have made in kids'

lives. My first appointment out of seminary was at Tahlequah First United Methodist Church where I got to know many people at the Circle of Care Children's Home," said John.

Earlier the Crooches established a charitable gift annuity (CGA) with the Foundation as a way to support the ministry of Circle of Care.

*Continued on page 5.*



John and Jamie Crooch established a charitable gift annuity to benefit Circle of Care.



## Create your plan

David Battles, Executive Vice President

While we would never attend a musical or show without a ticket or take a trip without luggage, most Americans have not taken the time to plan for their future.

We simply never get around to it; and the result is disappointing. When we fail to plan, our dreams, wishes and hopes may never be fully realized. Unfortunately, this also means our family and beneficiaries experience the expense and frustration of estate administration. A few months of probate can destroy what it took a lifetime to create. Do not let this happen to you or your family.

In these two pages, we will show how simple and enjoyable it can be. In less time than it takes to choose and arrange a summer vacation, you can complete a plan outlining your goals and letting your family and friends

know the values you hold dearly. Take the time to plan your life, your future, and your legacy. You will be glad you did, and every day thereafter, you can expect the peace and comfort of knowing the life you live today will matter tomorrow.

The Foundation offers many resources to help you with estate planning, including our *Christian Guide to Planning Your Will and Trust*. Call us at 800-259-6863 to request your copy of this free and informational guide.



## Investment update

Billy Meade, CPA, Controller & Treasurer

Stocks have opened sharply lower in August in anticipation of a slowdown in the U.S. economy—including the possibility of another recession; European debt troubles; a possible slowdown in the Chinese economy; dissatisfaction with the Congressional action and political maneuvering over raising the U.S. debt ceiling on August 2; and most recently a rating downgrade of U.S. Treasury obligations from AAA to AA+ by Standard & Poor's on August 5.

Despite the historic downgrade, Treasuries have remained an attractive safe haven as investors continue to shed stocks. While all of the above may be legitimate economic concerns; significant market declines often gather momentum as investors observe, react, and panic irrespective of any economic or market fundamentals.

Given the breadth of the sell-off, it appears some trading has been panic driven. There are still profitable, industry leading companies with healthy balance sheets trading at historically attractive price levels.

As we have stated when faced with past economic challenges, the Foundation has long adhered to a consistent, long-term and disciplined strategy for managing a diversified investment program. We avoid making hasty investment decisions in response to short-term market volatility. We continue to follow this strategy in both up markets and down markets, and it has successfully stood the test of time. We are confident our approach is prudent, and we will continue to faithfully serve the needs of our churches and donors. For additional investment or account information, please contact me at 405-525-6863 or [bmeade@okumf.org](mailto:bmeade@okumf.org).

# PLAN TO CARE BY CARING TO PLAN

While there are plenty of uncertainties for not having a will or estate plan, there are great rewards for those who do have one. For those who plan, there is a comfort and satisfaction in knowing love for family and friends will continue for years to come. Property and assets enjoyed today will be preserved and appreciated tomorrow.

There is another benefit, too. Many individuals who have a will also include a provision in their plan for their local United Methodist Church or favorite United Methodist ministry.

Including a charitable organization in your will has many benefits.

Perhaps most importantly, it demonstrates and affirms the prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness you vowed and lived out will be transformed into a lasting legacy.

When you include a gift in your will to your church or favorite ministry, you are telling yourself, your family and the world what you do, and the ministry we will do together is important and significant for all time. Your family will see the works and loves of your life will be lasting.

**“It is better to look ahead and prepare than to look back and regret.”**

Jackie Joyner-Kersee

There is also another benefit you and your heirs will appreciate. When you include a gift to a United Methodist cause, your estate benefits from an estate tax charitable deduction.

Your life matters and your wishes count. Use the Foundation’s Wills Planner to identify those values

and people important to you. Rather than leaving questions of what you would have done or would have liked to do, you leave a lasting legacy. It is one that clearly demonstrates a commitment beyond your years, but not beyond your reach.

Visit our website at [www.okumf.org](http://www.okumf.org) for our online Wills Planner or call us at 800-259-6863 for our free *Christian Guide to Planning Your Will & Trust*.

## Sample Language for Your Attorney

A gift through your will may be made several different ways. Below are two sets of suggested wording to include your church in your will. Please discuss and share these options with your attorney.

### *Specific Percentage of Estate*

I give and bequeath to The Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation, Inc., an Oklahoma, not-for-profit, tax-exempt corporation, as a permanent endowment, \_\_\_ percent of my gross estate, for the benefit of *(name of church institution(s) or local church)*.

### *Specific Amount of Estate*

I give and bequeath to The Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation, Inc., an Oklahoma, not-for-profit, tax-exempt corporation, as a permanent endowment, \$\_\_\_ to be used for the benefit of *(name of church institution(s) or local church)*.

# Tough questions about church finance

Make plans to attend the Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation's Stewardship Focus Day on August 26 in Oklahoma City at United Methodist Church of the Servant. Pastors and church leaders across the state will gather for the one-day seminar featuring guest speaker Reverend Dr. Clif Christopher.

Registration is \$60 per person. Continuing education credit is available for clergy. Register on the Foundation's website at [www.okumf.org](http://www.okumf.org) or call Loyce Gandy at 800-259-6863.

Below Christopher answers tough questions clergy and church leaders ask about church giving and finances. Christopher will go in-depth with these questions and more at the August 26 seminar.

**QUESTION:** Many pastors do not see it as their responsibility to raise money, they pass that on to the Finance Committee or ignore it all together. Would you agree with that perspective?

**ANSWER:** It is very much the pastor's responsibility to raise money. The pastor is the CEO of his or her church, and if the pastor

is not willing to work to secure funding for the organization they lead, then who should? The good pastor, however, goes way beyond that to realize helping develop generosity in persons is a key part of their growth in Christ.

**QUESTION:** Many churches use a crisis message to motivate church folk to give. "We are behind on the budget." or "We can't pay the bills next month unless you give more." Is this the best strategy or could you suggest something more fruitful?

**ANSWER:** Not only is it *not* the best message, it is the absolute worst message. People do not give to sinking ships, but to strong organizations that are changing lives.

**QUESTION:** What is the resistance to talk openly about stewardship and finances in churches?

**"People do not give to sinking ships, but to strong organizations that are changing lives."**

**ANSWER:** It is the chief sin of our people. Who likes talking about their sins?

**QUESTION:** How would you advise a pastor of a small congregation that has little or no



Dr. Clif Christopher

history in meaningful stewardship education or practices to begin developing a stewardship education approach in the church?

**ANSWER:** The truth is that pastors in small and large congregations have very little stewardship education. Seminaries have historically had limited or no focus on financial stewardship.

I would begin a reading program and then get a small group to join in. Let them grow together.

**QUESTION:** What is the impact of a pastor's giving habits on his or her congregation? Does it really make much difference?

**ANSWER:** The sheep are not going where the shepherd is not leading. The impact of the pastor's personal giving is paramount in the local church.

**QUESTION:** I've been told by my treasurer in our small church that the pastor is not to know about

the giving practices of the members, but my district superintendent says that the pastor should always know this information. Who is correct?

**ANSWER:** The district superintendent is 100% correct. What could be the possible rationale for the leader of the organization and one charged with making disciples in that arena being kept in the dark. It denies the pastor of a key indicator into the spiritual health for whom he or she is responsible.

**QUESTION:** Our younger adults are not strong givers; how might we help to foster stronger giving among those under 40?

**ANSWER:** Quit communicating with them the same way you communicate with their parents and grandparents.

Church stewardship expert Dr. Clif Christopher is a nationwide church growth and finance consultant and authored *Not Your Parents' Offering Plate* and the follow-up book *Whose Offering Plate Is It?* Christopher's

leadership and expertise in the area of church giving and finance will make Stewardship Focus Day well worth your investment and time.



## Giving now, *continued from page one*

“Jamie and I wanted to help in ministry now. The most obvious and careful way to give is through the Foundation,” said John, who retired as president of the Foundation in 2006.

David Battles helped us achieve our philanthropic goals,” he continued.

Battles, the Foundation’s executive vice president, provided a CGA illustration for the Crooches as well as explained the benefits the gift will provide them and Circle of Care. Billy Meade, the Foundation’s controller and treasurer, also provided comprehensive information on the tax benefits as well as income

payments from the annuity.

A CGA was attractive to John and Jamie for its practicality. With a CGA, they receive payments monthly, quarterly or annually as well as tax benefits. After they pass away, the remaining funds will establish an endowment fund to benefit Circle of Care.

“A charitable gift annuity is a great way to make an impact on ministry. We benefit now and certainly Circle of Care will benefit from the gift later,” said John.

“It’s nice to give now instead of waiting until we are gone. Having the satisfaction of giving now is personally a great value and benefit,”

he continued. “My only regret is we can’t do more. However, we hope others will use the Foundation and the different giving vehicles available to make an impact on ministries like Circle of Care.”

John and Jamie are lifelong United Methodists and attend New Covenant United Methodist Church in Edmond. John retired in 2006 after 47 years in ministry in the Oklahoma Annual Conference.

**THE OKLAHOMA UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION**

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Address Service Requested

# Petree Grant deadline nears

As the Sept. 15 deadline nears, churches and ministries are encouraged to apply for the Foundation's Petree Grant. Grants are awarded for projects specializing in the care of children, youth, the aging or needy, and the disadvantaged. Applications require your district superintendent's approval and signature before being sent to the Foundation.

Since 1996 the Petree Committee has awarded more than 200 grants totaling more than \$1 million to different United Methodist agencies and churches across Oklahoma. The committee encourages agencies and churches with innovative projects, programs, and ministries bringing youth, the aging, or marginalized into a closer relationship with God, their church and their community to apply for the grant. Grants are awarded up to \$10,000.

In 2010, 14 grants were awarded to churches, agencies and ministries totaling more than \$89,000.

The grant application is available on our web site at [www.okumf.org](http://www.okumf.org) and must be postmarked or hand delivered to the Foundation by Sept. 15. For questions or more information, call Barbara Gayle at the Foundation at 800-259-6863.

