

# HERITAGE

*An Endowment Development Newsletter of First United Methodist Church of San Diego*

Summer 2011

## Happy 20th Anniversary Covenant Circle

THE CONCEPT OF THE COVENANT CIRCLE grew from a meeting January 15, 1990, when a few longtime members of First United Methodist Church gathered in the home of Rev. Mark Trotter to plan a reunion of those who had been members of First Church for over 20 years.

Rev. Trotter and Myron Lewis were joined in that initial 1990 meeting by Richard Peerson and Edward Hurlbut, who became co-chairs of the endeavor.

Before long, a Founders Planning Group was established and after many meetings, over a year of recruitment and volunteer work, the vision of these early planners came to fruition. On May 31, 1992, fifty three members of First Church gathered to celebrate its long time members. From this group, the Covenant Circle was established.

Rev. Trotter's leadership was instrumental in the realization of the Covenant Circle, which was inspired and administered by Myron and his wife Jeannette. Rev. Trotter and Myron had long discussed various alternatives to providing long term funding to support the Church and community outside the variables of the annual Stewardship Campaign. Myron had previously initiated the commitment opportunity in the local YMCA and that curriculum became the basis for Covenant Circle at First Church.

Another champion of Covenant Circle was Rev. Hilka Green, associate pastor at the time. Neil Larson recalls, "Rev. Green was surprised to find so many Church members who had not completed a

will that directed the eventual disposition of their estate. The state of California generally received most of the assets upon their passing. Rev. Green started sensitively inquiring if members had ever thought about including the Church in their estate plans. His efforts caused an increase in wills being prepared and a decrease in the messy business of probate through the court system. First Church was sometimes designated as a recipient."

Larson, a member of First Church since 1965, served as Chairman of the Founders Planning Group. Neil and his wife, Marjie, were joined in this group by John Hermann, Jim and Joanne Jackson, Myron and Jeannette Lewis, Harriett Lorros, Rilla Lovell, Cynthia Miller, Rev. Mark and Jean Trotter.

Larson also served as the Master of Ceremonies at the inauguration celebration of Covenant Circle in May of 1992. Since that time, over 200 members and friends of First Church have included the church in their estate planning, recognizing the charitable tradition of giving and expanding the commitment of others to carry forward our rich legacy. This ensures the practice is passed along in support of our church's exciting future of praise and service.

The First United Methodist Foundation of San Diego was formed in 1998. As a nonprofit religious corporation it manages the assets of the Foundation, which includes the gifts and donations generated by Covenant Circle members.

Today, Covenant Circle totals 169 members, is chaired by Janice Lau and will officially celebrate their 20th Anniversary this Spring.



**"The Heritage of the past is the seed that brings forth the harvest of the future."—unknown**

---

## College Financial Aid Planning Seminar

### Save the Date: Sunday, September 18, 2011



If you have children or grandchildren who are facing the navigation of the sometimes turbulent and unknown waters of College Financial Aid Planning, this is a seminar designed for you and your family. Join us Sunday, September 18, at 11:15 a.m. in The Cove when Mr. Frank Jonasson, Ed.M. and longtime member of First Church, will help chart the course.

Mr. Jonasson brings thirty-two (32) years experience and will share valuable resources to help you through the College Financial Aid Planning process. As the Associate Director of Student Recruitment and School Relations at San Diego State University, Mr. Jonasson helped hundreds of students achieve their educational goals and provided financial aid counseling to students and families alike.

Attend with your family for this informative time. Questions? Please call the Development Office, 619-287-3442.

*This seminar is sponsored by the Endowment Development Committee  
In cooperation with the Youth Council of First United Methodist Church*

---

## Do You Have a Tax, Legal, Real Estate, Marketing or Financial Background?

We Need Your Help! The Endowment Development Committee at First Church is looking for members who would be interested in serving on this committee.

The purpose of the Endowment Development Committee is to create an awareness of the benefits and varied possibilities planned giving offers to members who want to carry forward their support of our Church. The Financial Planning Seminar program, sponsored by the EDC, highlights various opportunities for one to make a positive difference in our Church now and in the future.

We invite anyone from the congregation who is interested in serving on the Endowment Development Committee and/or contributing articles to Heritage to please contact Sandra Sinn in the Development Office at (619) 287-3442 or [ssinn@fumcsd.org](mailto:ssinn@fumcsd.org). Thank you. – *The Endowment Development Committee*

---

## Covenant Circle Membership

**Please Join with Us to Ensure our Rich Legacy at First Church**

Membership in Covenant Circle is afforded to anyone who has specified a gift of any size to First Church through their estate planning. Might this describe you? If First Church is included in any portion of your estate planning, you are a Covenant Circle member and we would like to acknowledge your commitment. We also understand privacy is essential and all financial matters are handled confidentially. Should you not want to be publically recognized as a member, but would like to join the Covenant Circle by remembering First Church in your plans, please contact the Financial Development Office, 619-297-3442. It is not unusual for members to allocate a percentage of their estate to the Church, but not notify the church of this action. We invite you to consider including First Church in your plans. Remember: It is the commitment, not the size of the gift that is important. A simple will is what is necessary to designate something for the church. Maybe you would like to name First Church as the eventual recipient of your life insurance policy. Our Pooled Income Fund may better meet your needs. Whether you choose an outright gift of money, securities, property or other marketable assets, we are available to answer any questions you may have for remembering your church family when making your estate decisions. For information on ways to leave a legacy to the church and to become a member of the Covenant Circle, please call (619) 297-3442 or e-mail [ssinn@fumcsd.org](mailto:ssinn@fumcsd.org).

# Careful Estate Planning is Essential

## *A Quick Reference Guide for Important Documents and Tasks for the Surviving Spouse*

When a loved one dies, you are suddenly faced with a series of actions and decisions, both personal and financial. It can often seem too overwhelming. However, with careful estate planning and advance preparation of a surviving spouse's checklist, transition through this difficult time can be eased.

Sound estate planning and a planned checklist for the surviving spouse helps you stay focused and in control. Listed in this article are areas to keep in mind for your specific needs.

1) During your estate planning, gather all important documents and keep together them in a safe place. These documents might include:

- will,
- trusts,
- death certificate (10-25 copies),
- marriage license,
- birth certificates for your children,
- Social Security numbers,
- insurance policies, including life insurance, home insurance, auto or other property insurance,
- financial account statements and documents, including checking accounts, savings accounts, brokerage accounts, credit card accounts, pensions, retirement programs such as IRAs and other company-sponsored retirement programs,
- your spouse's company benefits booklet,
- military discharge papers if your spouse ever served in the military.

2) Take your time. This is not a juncture to make any immediate financial decisions. You may want to consult your financial advisor. If you do not already have a professional to turn to, make sure you screen any potential new advisors carefully. If your spouse is in poor health, you may want to make this important decision before your spouse's death.

3) Contact your spouse's life insurance company and collect the insurance. You can do this right away, but you don't have to invest the money immediately. If you can't find the life insurance policy, contact the American Council of Life Insurers ([www.acli.com](http://www.acli.com)) for help in tracing the policy.

4) If your spouse is employed at the time of death, contact their employer. You may be entitled to unpaid

compensation due to your spouse. There may be a retirement plan, including profit sharing, pension, stock options, 401(k), etc. Depending upon your spouse's benefit package, group life, accidental death or travel insurance policies may be applicable. If your spouse died on the job, you may be entitled to worker's compensation benefits.

As a surviving spouse, you may be eligible to roll over money from your spouse's retirement plan into your own IRA without penalty. Depending upon your age, it may make more sense for you to keep the assets in your spouse's retirement plan. This is an option you should consult an estate attorney or financial planner before reaching a final decision.

There may be a company policy on medical insurance for spouse survivors, or you may be eligible for COBRA, a federal law that allows employees and their dependents to continue to receive medical benefits previously provided by the employer. Again, it is best to consult a professional to see if this applies to your individual situation.

5) If you are not the executor of the estate, contact the executor of record. The executor will be indicated in the will and/or trust. This person can be a great assistance when you need to make any important decisions as you navigate through the process of settling the estate.

6) Make sure you have enough cash on hand. You should try to have at least six months of expenses in a very liquid account, such as a money market account. You may want to consider keeping part of the life insurance or other death benefit as cash in such an account.

7) Apply for government death benefits. Surviving spouses may be eligible for Social Security retirement benefits as early as age 60. Surviving families with children younger than age 18 may be eligible for Social Security benefits.

8) If your spouse was a military veteran, he or she can be buried for free in one of the national cemeteries. The Veterans Administration will provide a flag for the memorial service, a headstone for the grave, and financial assistance for the burial. Find out about veteran's spouse survivor benefits available to you.

9) If you're 65 or older, you may be entitled to certain Medicare benefits. *(continued on page 4)*



FIRST CHURCH  
*First United  
Methodist Church*

2111 Camino del Rio South  
San Diego, California 92108-3697  
Contact the Financial Development Office  
at (619) 297-3442 or [ssinn@fumcsd.org](mailto:ssinn@fumcsd.org).

**HERITAGE**

*Editor:*  
Saundra Sinn  
Design, typesetting and printing by  
The Church Print Shop.

The Newsletter also may be found on our website at  
[www.fumcsd.org/heritage](http://www.fumcsd.org/heritage)

Nonprofit Org.  
U. S. Postage  
Paid  
San Diego, CA  
Permit No. 514

---

*(continued from page 4)*

10) Re-title your spouse's sole or joint property in your own name, as provided in the will. These include your house, car, safe-deposit box, brokerage accounts, credit cards, bank accounts, and other assets. Different procedures apply for different financial institutions and various circumstances. Very likely, you will need a written request from you and a copy of the death certificate to proceed.

11) You will want to identify all your spouse's assets and liabilities. This includes mortgages, car payments, as well as assets and liabilities in financial accounts.

*The First United Methodist Church of San Diego does not engage in rendering specific legal or tax advice. The information is provided as a service. For advice in specific situations, the services of competent legal, tax and financial planning professionals should be obtained.*

Divorce settlements might be included if your spouse was previously married and child support orders still apply.

12) If you have children in college, the financial-aid department can be a very helpful resource. Your change in circumstances may make you eligible for financial assistance.

With advance planning and organization, the financial arrangements as the surviving spouse can be made without being overwhelmed.

Most importantly, take care of yourself and stay close to your loved ones during this difficult period.



---

## *In Remembrance*

The Covenant Circle lost four faithful members in the past fiscal year. Honorees at the April Luncheon included Virginia Hurchings, Myron Lewis, Donna Meissner and Don Perkins. Each member chose their unique way to help continue the church's legacy. We are blessed to have known these wonderful members and give thanks for their individual generous actions.

*Pictured: Myron Lewis, first Development Director at First Church.*