

Spring Harvest

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The Florida United Methodist Foundation

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It's happening more and more frequently these days. When I look into the refrigerator in search of something nutritious or refreshing, lately I have been seeing bags of lettuce – not the supermarket kind with a California brand name on the bag, but plain, clear bags – seeming to materialize out of thin air, accumulating in the produce drawer. “The source of this munificence?” you might ask. The answer is a good story.

As my wife LeeAnn wrote in our church newsletter, every week or so Edna opens the trunk of her car and unloads bag after plain, clear bag of beautiful green leaf lettuce. Edna and her husband Randy, who just celebrated his 90th birthday, are church members who farmed in Connecticut before retiring here in Orange Park. Their suburban lawn is plowed and carefully tended. Row upon row of beets, carrots, strawberries, squash, cucumbers, eggplant, and, of course, lettuce make our backyard herb garden pale in comparison. Anyone visiting the church office or Edna and Randy's Sunday school class is blessed with fresh produce, thanks to our Connecticut transplants. Some of those bags of lettuce make their way from Edna's trunk to my wife's office and eventually to our produce bin.

This is the second harvest we have witnessed in less than a year. Florida winters, even cold ones, allow for the bonus of a spring harvest. For gardeners from colder climates, this just beats all! The sheer abundance of a well-tended garden in a favorable climate produces more than just a lot of food; it brings deep satisfaction to the gardeners, and even to their church family.

In churches of the Florida Conference, we have the opportunity to participate in God's growing season as we approach Pentecost. A Spring Harvest is in progress, with ministry happening in every row, and mission sending bushels of Good News to folks hungry for God's love in places near and far.

And as the work of the Church continues throughout the year, so do the expenses.

As we approach summer, when giving commonly goes into a slump in many churches, it is important for local churches to be on sound financial ground. If you haven't given what you had planned so far this year, or if you wish to give a special offering of thanksgiving, this would be a great time to do it. If you are planning a summer vacation or time away, please consider pre-paying your pledge or other regular giving before you leave. And thank you for all of your faithful giving that furthers God's work in local churches and through our United Methodist connection.

As the stewardship voice of the Florida Conference, the Foundation is ready to help you, your family and your church with anything related to comprehensive Christian stewardship. For more information please call, click or write us at 1-800-282-8011, extension 106; www.fumf.org; or PO Box 3767, Lakeland, FL 33802.