

## An Innovative Pastor

Nearly 150 churches in the Louisiana Annual Conference receive distribution checks each year from people who are no longer members. These gifts come from people who are now members of the Church Triumphant. While they no longer attend church physically, they are able to support the church they loved during their lifetimes through planned giving.

**Steve Caraway**, pastor of **Mangum Memorial United Methodist Church** in Shreveport, celebrated their legacies in the church newsletter:

***Dear Church Family,***

Dr. Archie McDonald, history professor at Stephen F. Austin, offers a homespun radio essay every Friday on the local public radio station, Red River Radio. The range of his topics is fairly wide, from current events and trends to historical perspectives, borne of his East Texas roots.

Recently, he told of the ordeals he and his family went through buying a tombstone. They encountered a distracted salesperson the first time and on another occasion waited a long while as the only salesperson on site took care of a family who had lots of questions.

Dr. McDonald admitted his impatience with it all, but conceded that what he and his family were doing in the first place contributed to their displeasure. Finally, when it came time for their selection of the right marker, he bought a large one—enough for the whole family to be buried under because, as he said, “I don’t want to go through that again.”

These five people bravely and faithfully prepared for their deaths. And because of their love for their Lord and Mangum Memorial United Methodist Church, they planned to continue to give to their church every year until there is no longer a Mangum Church.

Thinking about one’s own mortality is not for cowards. It takes courage.

In recent days, Mangum United Methodist Church has received checks from the courageous planning of **Ethaline Holmes, Burton and Mary Weekley**, and **Tom and Frances Lunsford**. These five people bravely and faithfully prepared for their deaths. And because of their love for their Lord and Mangum Memorial United Methodist Church, they planned to continue to give to their church every year until there is no longer a Mangum Church. Through gift annuities through the United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana, they received immediate *tax relief*, provided for themselves a *lifetime source of income*, and *provided for their church in perpetuity*. Each year, the distribution from their investments comes to us, totaling several thousands of dollars.

If this is something you and your family would like to consider doing, contact me and let me put you in touch with someone from the Foundation who can guide you through the best way you can plan as Ms. Holmes, the Weekleys and the Lunsfords did.

They provided shoulders on which we can stand. Maybe you can, too.

***I’ll see you in your place this Sunday.***

***Steve Caraway***