

# A Will to Give

A newsletter for those who want to leave a legacy.



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Tracy and John Martin

## The Power of God's Love

They met at church more than thirty years ago in North Carolina. He was attending NC State and she was at UNC. Then in the spring of 1985, John Martin was accepted to graduate school at Harvard. Tracy had one year of pharmacy school

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left at UNC so they decided to date long distance for one year. After graduating, they were married in the summer of 1986, and Tracy moved to Boston. John promised Tracy he would finish grad school and then they could come back to North Carolina. In the meantime, they both fell in love with Boston and with the Boston Church of Christ.

As leaders of the church for more than three decades, John and Tracy Martin have decided to give a legacy gift to the church to continue the important mission work here and abroad. "You don't have to be extraordinarily wealthy to be able to give a legacy gift. By using various mechanisms, you can make a planned gift very affordably and it's tax favorable," John says.

Tracy believes that a gift like this is analogous to planting seeds. "Until you plant it and allow it to be sacrificed, it's not going to become that huge plant or tree. You plant seeds of all different sizes and types in your life as you can, and then you have faith that God is going to continue to give the plant whatever it needs. It starts with being able to put that seed in the ground," she says.

Both John, a principal at a commercial architectural firm, and Tracy, formerly a pharmacist for thirty years and now a group fitness instructor, are family group leaders in



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the church and have also served on the church's board, various committees, and task forces. Now they are learning to mentor and coach other family group leaders.

Their gift has been planned over many years. From the time they were first married, they agreed that it was important to give back to the church—both in sweat equity and financially. “We knew that we wanted to build the church here in Boston. We’ve been fortunate. We’ve had good careers, and we had hoped to be able to give a legacy gift toward the end of our careers. By good fortune and God’s blessings, we can,” John notes. They are empty nesters—their daughter, son, and daughter-in-law all live nearby. “We want to be generous and make sure our family is taken care of, but we can also do something for others. It wasn’t difficult for us to know who and how to do that.” Tracy says.

**“If I entrust my funds to God, they’re going to be well spent. He will be faithful with them. And that leaves me to be . . . thankful.”**

The Martins made this decision with the help of their financial advisor. “The mechanism is an affordable way to give a legacy gift. It is a whole life insurance policy. We donate the annual premium to the church and the church owns the policy. When the last of us dies, the church is the beneficiary of the policy,” John says. He and Tracy are happy to be part of the new planned giving initiative of the church. “We’d like to see more folks take advantage of giving this way,” John says. Tracy agrees, “You want to share what you have with the causes that you care most about, and this seemed like the right thing to do.”

Their hopes and dreams for the church are focused on Jesus’ mission. Tracy says she hopes the church continues to “reach out to people who have need...to touch all the cross sections of the community. I don’t want the church to ever be

insular. My dream for the church is that it just continues to be about the people.” John has a more numerical goal. “History tells us it’s quite probable that the first-century church in Ephesus had 10,000 members. Wouldn’t it be great if, in the Boston metro area, the church was 10,000 people? I think through our ongoing weekly giving, and also through long-term giving, it’s all designed to support ministry,” he says. He sees that previous legacy gifts have been helpful to people worldwide. “You need that extraordinary giving—the giving that is more planned—to be able to send people all around the world.”

Tracy’s favorite scripture is 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, and then verse 24. It says, “*Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you.*” And verse 24, “*The One who calls you is faithful, and He will do it.*” Her interpretation is, “If you wonder what God’s will is, it is to be rejoicing, praying, and expressing gratitude. Verse 24 reminds me that if I entrust my funds to God, they’re going to be well spent. He will be faithful with them. And that leaves me to be joyful, prayerful, and thankful.”

John believes that being a good steward of your finances is reflected in 2 Timothy 1:7. “*For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power, and love and discipline.*” John says that being a good steward “is based in love. It’s powerful. It has the ability to make a significant difference in other people’s lives. That’s the power. It requires self-discipline. I think that God blesses us and He gives us that gift to use our talents for others.”



**For more information about giving to the church, please contact:**

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# Evangelist's Corner

After announcing our 2030 Boston Church vision last fall, we continue to build a church that hears His voice, proclaims His name, and writes the future. The Boston Church is beginning to see great indications that God is indeed blessing our pursuit of this dream here in the first half of 2023.

We are working and praying to see God bring in more than 200 souls to the church this year, and so far, we've seen nearly 80 souls come to Christ! Our efforts to proclaim His name online are also taking off. There are, on average, about 75 to 100 people coming out to our church services every week from our efforts on social media alone. A few weeks ago, a first-year law student at Harvard was baptized because he followed us on social media, was contacted by the BCC and Central region social media teams, came out to church, studied the Bible, and was baptized. Increasingly, we are hearing more and more stories just like this.



Kevin Miller and Melissa Miller

Last, the investment of the entire Boston Church in the youth of our community has resulted in much fruit. There have been nearly 140 college students baptized over the last two school years, and over 80 from the downtown colleges alone. The gospel is so relevant and is spreading, thanks in large part to the financial investment of the disciples of the Boston Church, allowing for the hiring and training of leadership across these ministries. To God be the Glory!

## How to Make a Gift of Life Insurance

Do you own a life insurance policy that you no longer need for its original purpose? Perhaps you purchased it to pay off a mortgage or cover college tuition, but now the house is paid off and the kids are grown. You can turn this asset into a powerful gift. These are the most common ways to meet your charitable goals with life insurance:

- 1. You can name us as a beneficiary.** We would then receive all or part of the proceeds when you die. This is a flexible gift that you can change later if your needs or goals change.
- 2. You can make a gift of a paid-up policy.** You would simply need to assign us all incidents of ownership and name us as the beneficiary. We would receive the proceeds later, but you would qualify for a charitable income tax deduction now, at the time of the gift.
- 3. You can give a policy that is not yet paid up.** You would then have to gift us the premium amount each year—annual gifts that would qualify for charitable deductions.

As you plan, consider this unique opportunity to make a substantial, cost-effective gift to Boston Church of Christ.

This information is not intended as legal advice. For legal advice, please consult an estate attorney.

Be sure to include our tax ID number and address in any gift of life insurance:

**Boston Church of Christ**  
**Tax ID #04-2494881**  
**214 Concord Street**  
**Framingham, MA 01702**



**Boston**  
CHURCH OF CHRIST

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## From the Elders

**There's a lot I love about our 2030 vision:**

- Hear His Voice
- Proclaim His Name
- Write the Future

**It roots us in our history**—the Boston Church has always loved God's Word—and it invests in a future that we trust God to shape. Legacy Giving is a bit like that. It relies on the strengths of the Boston Church—we have always been generous—and it builds a future that we see by faith.

**The growing faith and zeal** in our regions show that, as a church, we are beginning to catch that vision. A couple of things that may not be clear about legacy giving are that it can certainly be done anonymously and that many specific wishes can be met. You can always talk with Gary Slebodnick (see his contact information on page 2) or me about your plans to give to the church. It can be as simple as putting the church in your will, or creating a gift through life insurance, your retirement account, a donor-advised fund, or gifting stock. You can also take a look at our new website for more information: [plannedgiving.bostonchurch.org](http://plannedgiving.bostonchurch.org).

**Thanks very much and have a great summer.**



Mike Van Auken, Chairman of the Elders