

Sermon Illustration 5

Title: Seeds

Key Text: 2 Corinthians 9:10-11, NRSV

Did you know? More than 10,000 seed samples for over 300 species of plants are stored in a secure vault, deep inside a mountain on a tiny Arctic island near the North Pole.

The Global Seed Vault stores the seeds of life, should they ever be lost to catastrophe or cataclysm. However, great care must be taken to ensure the seeds do not begin to sprout.

Why? Seeds grow. God did not design them to remain dormant. Although it is important to have seeds stored in case of emergency, sitting still is not normal seed behavior.

God made seeds to grow and multiply. God designed seeds to produce plants that produce fruit of some sort – and more seeds.

Some seeds have even germinated and flourished after thousands of years in storage. It is hard to keep a seed from doing what God created it to do. Why? It contains the potential for abundant life. It offers the hope of a brighter tomorrow, a hint of a promise to come.

Our giving does the same thing. When we give generously, we plant a seed. In 2 Corinthians 9:10-11, NRSV, the apostle Paul tells us that God supplies the seed for us to sow in order to produce thanksgiving to God. “He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us.”

God gives us seed to sow through our giving so can cause an abundant crop to grow. As we give generously, God enriches us in every way, according to Paul, so we can give even more.

The result? More people thank God for God’s abundant goodness because of our cheerful giving. Our willingness to plant a seed produces thanksgiving to God.

When we give freely and cheerfully, we plant seeds that no one can keep from growing. When we generously unite, we do more to point others to the One from whom all blessings flow.





- Choose a way your local church takes a risk in serving your community. Encourage your congregation to give generously and serve courageously to support it.
- Connect this illustration with God's global interests by sharing a way your church's local giving multiplies through connectional giving with The United Methodist Church.

1. **The Black College Fund** supports United Methodism's historically black colleges and universities. These schools create vibrant spiritual environments that encourage pride and self-esteem. Through United Methodist Church giving, we support the important work of 11 schools committed to academic excellence based on the Christian perspective of community service and social responsibility. Students interact with academic staffs that serve as strong cultural and spiritual mentors.

<http://www.umcsgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-black-college-fund>

2. Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world." The **World Communion Sunday** offering makes education and vocational impact possible for gifted and qualified students from around the globe, allowing them to become the world-changers God created them to be. The people of The United Methodist Church believe God created and gifted all of God's children to build the kingdom Jesus ushered in. Together, our giving provides more opportunities for many deserving students to have the resources they need to succeed. Our giving on World Communion Sunday, enables the most powerful tool to change the world—education.

<http://www.umcsgiving.org/ministry-articles/world-communion-sunday>

3. The **Interdenominational Cooperation Fund** enables United Methodists to have a presence and a voice in the activities of several national and worldwide ecumenical organizations. Together, we work in partnership with ecumenical organizations to bear witness to a common Christian faith. This fund provides the United Methodist share of the basic budgets of these organizations.

<http://www.umcsgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-interdenominational-cooperation-fund>

4. The **General Administration Fund** provides for the expenses of the sessions of the General Conference, the Judicial Council, special commissions and committees constituted by the General Conference and other administrative agencies and activities recommended for inclusion in the budget by the General Council on Finance and Administration and approved by the General Conference. It is not quite as glamorous as the more visible work The United Methodist Church does such as eradicating malaria, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ or raising up new leaders to develop innovative solutions to the challenges facing our world today. Guided by God's Spirit, the General Administration Fund is the oil that lubricates the gears moving the church's work forward to influence hearts and lives. Without it, the life-giving work of The United Methodist Church simply would not be possible.

<http://www.umcsgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-general-administration-fund>

