

# Leaving a Legacy

THE BENEFITS OF PLANNED GIVING



A collaborative effort by The Fund for the Diaconate and AED, to support and improve the lives of Episcopal deacons.

Deacon Robert Franken, treasurer of *The Fund for the Diaconate*, was interviewed by Deacon John Ray about planned giving can how a planned gift can help The Fund to assist more deacons and those in formation.

*Interview has been edited for clarity and length.*

**John Ray: Give us The Fund's background.**

**Robert Franken:** *The Fund for the Diaconate* was formed in 1927 by deaconesses, frustrated that they weren't allowed to be part of CPG. So they created their own fund. If any of their members reached the age where they needed help, this fund would help. We continue that base ministry. We provide sustaining grants and have expanded our grants to include postulants and candidates funding their training; those in emergency situations like floods; those with medical needs not covered by insurance, or those without insurance.

We have people who have given their lives to ministry, who may not have planned for their own retirement sufficiently. Or in the case of Formation Grants for deacons in training, part of what we're trying to change in the diaconate is to get younger people involved, and younger people with families might not be able to afford what it costs, they might need help with child care, or books or tuition.

**John: Talk about Planned Giving.**

**Robert:** A planned gift is one of several things. It's either a very large one-time gift, say a \$50,000 gift, or putting an organization into your will. When you pass on, that organization will receive money. Or it's making *The Fund* a beneficiary of one of your insurance policies or IRAs, or by giving a major stock.

To put this in some perspective, *Advancing the Diaconate* is a two-part campaign. It's about supporting annual gifts and memberships to AED, who advocate for deacons, provide resources & events and set standards for what diaconate training looks like. AED supports deacons in their everyday ministry.

*The Fund for the Diaconate* is different in that we're looking to be there for the next generation of deacons. Five, six or 10 generations from now. We're a place for somebody to know that their legacy can be

to help make things possible for deacons in the future, beyond their life. It's a great opportunity and gift to someone in the future.

**John: Who should consider planned giving to The Fund? And let's be clear that people need to consult with their financial adviser, their attorney, when thinking about this.**

**Robert:** I would encourage every deacon, whether you have a little or a lot, to put *The Fund* in your will. If you don't have a will, the state decides who gets your money or your assets or your home or whatever.

**John: The fiscal soundness of The Fund?**

**Robert:** *The Fund* is audited every year and has been on a sound fiscal footing for years. We have grown over the years, other than this last year, where the stock market sort of took away some of that growth. But we've still grown *The Fund* over the years, and this year, we're giving away some \$400,000 in grants.

**John: And management of those assets is well supervised, right?**

**Robert:** Right. We work with, Bessemer Trust, that manages our money, a very reputable organization. Our investment committee is looking at whether we can put more of our money into sustainable investing and still be able to get some of the returns that we need, to be able to give the grants that we need to.

**John: The Advancing the Diaconate campaign is trying to move the needle a bit toward younger deacons who have a difficult time paying to become a deacon. Also, deacons who aren't wealthy, who don't have the financial backing behind them.**

**Robert:** And some are so dedicated that they serve as deacons probably to the peril of their own financial stability. I can't fault them for that. That's the call that they have from God and the responsibility. Now, should their congregations know more about who they are and what their needs are? Yes. Should their bishops know more about who they are and

what their needs are? Yes. We're working hand-in-hand with dioceses as people come to us and say they have needs. We immediately go to their bishop and have a conversation to make sure that there's greater awareness about who their deacons are.

**John: One of those things that we haven't talked about is retirement plans and being able to give from retirement plans.**

**Robert:** Well, at a given age, everybody is required to start taking distributions from their 401(k)s; those are mandatory and taxable. If you don't need that money, one of the things that you can do is give that, up to a certain amount, to a not-for-profit, such as *The Fund for the Diaconate*, and not have to pay taxes on it. We're a certified 501(c)(3) not-for-profit.

**John: People need to know who their beneficiaries are in life insurance policies, retirement plans, 401(k). Circumstances change and they may need to be updated.**

**Robert:** Right. Everybody should look at those on a regular basis. If you move, laws are different from state to state. You should know and keep records of your beneficiaries. Who's in your will? Who are your executors? Those are things that you ought to pay attention to.

And by the way, *The Fund* is able to receive mutual funds or stock transfers, as another way in which you can make a planned gift.

**John: If people have specific questions or want to start the process of planned giving, how can they reach you?**

**Robert:** I can be reached at 970-281-2311 or treasurer@fundfordiaconate.org. To name The Fund in your will or as a beneficiary, use our full name "The Fund for the Diaconate of the Episcopal Church" and include 23-7125960 our EIN number.

Visit [www.fundfordiaconate.org/planned-giving](http://www.fundfordiaconate.org/planned-giving). The entire interview will be available on AED's YouTube channel via [www.episcopaldeacons.org](http://www.episcopaldeacons.org).