

Partners IN PLANNING

Fall 2023

The Generosity of MTW Donors Preserves the Church in Ukraine By Chelsea Rollman

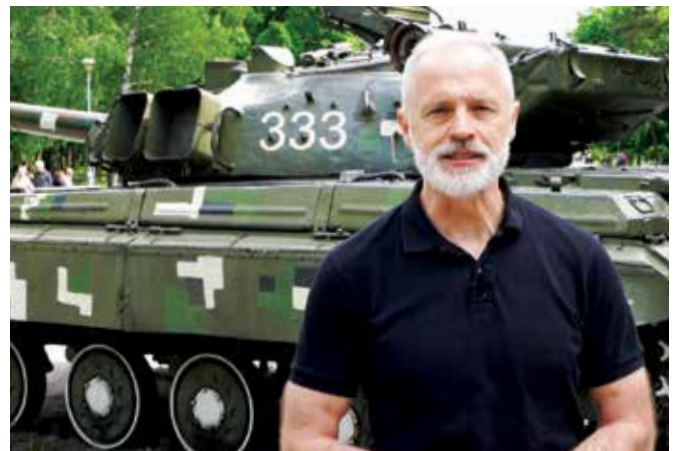


“On Thursday, February 24, 2022, we woke up early in the morning at 5:00 a.m. from loud explosions. And we knew right away what we feared the most came true. What we dreaded, happened to us,” said Ukrainian Pastor Ivan Bepalov.

After the Russian invasion on February 24, Ivan and the 14 other pastors in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ukraine made the difficult decision to stay in the country to care for those in the communities who were not able to evacuate. Financially speaking, the pastors were out of a job. From a pastoral perspective, they never had more work to do.

Fortunately, the generosity of MTW donors and their gifts to MTW’s Ukraine Crisis fund have made it possible for MTW missionaries, the Ukrainian pastors, and the Ukrainian churches to respond to the crisis.

MTW Crisis Relief Funds Continue to Help
According to MTW Ukraine Country Director Jon Eide, MTW’s Ukraine team saw an unprecedented amount of giving from donors in the West. MTW initially used the funds on transportation to evacuate millions of Ukrainians to safety, set up two refugee centers in Krakow, Poland, and Lviv, Ukraine, and supply humanitarian aid to displaced Ukrainians and Ukrainians who remained in the country.



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Today, MTW is able to deliver ongoing aid to the Ukrainian people. Through continued relief efforts such as the Crates for Ukraine initiative, MTW workers around Eastern Europe continue to provide food, shelter, clothing, hygiene products, and medical supplies to the 10 million Ukrainian refugees dispersed throughout the region.

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Year-End Generosity Strategies to Maximize Your Impact

As Christian stewards of God's resources, we know we should give as God gives. The end of the year is a season when many Christians take stock of all that God has given them and review the ways they are able to share the resources God has entrusted to them with others.

available when you make gifts of assets such as stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and real estate. When you make a gift of appreciated assets to charity, you receive a charitable deduction equal to the full fair market value of the property at the time of the transfer. Non-cash gifts of appreciated assets are deductible up to 30% of adjusted gross income, also with a five-year carryover for any excess.

2. Qualified Charitable Distribution

After reaching the age of 70 ½, you can make a direct-to-charity transfer from an IRA, known as a Qualified Charitable Distribution. You can increase your generosity and eliminate the tax implications up to \$100,000 per year. The QCD must be made directly

Let's take a high-level look at how year-end giving can provide benefit for you as well as the ministries you choose to support.

to ministry. It is not included in your taxable income and is not subject to deduction limitations on other charitable gifts you make.

The QCD can be used to meet your required minimum distributions if you do not need the income this year. The QCD applies to most traditional, inherited, and rollover IRAs—check with your fund manager to confirm the eligibility of your account.

3. Fund a Charitable Gift Annuity with a QCD

A charitable gift annuity is a planned giving contract between you and MTW. You make a gift to MTW using cash or appreciated securities and in return MTW will pay you or a loved one a fixed sum for life. Then at the time of your or your loved one's death, the remainder

of the gift goes to MTW to support their work of planting churches and transforming communities around the world.

In 2023, it is possible to make a QCD from an IRA of up to \$50,000 to fund a CGA. This is a one-time option. You must be 70 ½ years old and can name you or your spouse to receive payments. There is no charitable tax deduction for the gift and the CGA payments are taxed as ordinary income. However, there is no income tax on the QCD and it can count toward your required minimum distribution for the year.

4. Bundling With a Donor Advised Fund

A donor advised fund is a giving fund you set up with MTW and fund by making charitable gifts of cash, stock, mutual funds, or real estate. You receive an immediate charitable income tax deduction. Once the DAF is funded, you recommend grants from the fund to MTW missionaries or projects, your church, or other tax-exempt organizations.

If your itemized deductions do not exceed the standard deduction, you can combine or "bundle" two or more years of charitable contributions to your DAF into one year. You can itemize your deductions for the year you give and take the standard deduction the following years.

5. Gifts With Retained Income

It is also possible to make a gift to ministry and receive an income tax charitable deduction even though you retain income from the asset you transfer. Your gift can be designed to meet your income needs and provide maximum tax benefits.

We Can Help

MTW's Center for Estate and Gift Planning is currently offering a free e-book called "A Guide to Year-End Giving" with additional information on planning your year-end gifts. If you would like the e-book or would like to speak to us about your year-end giving options, please feel free to contact Beth Billingsley at 678-823-0028 or email her at beth.billingsley@mtw.org. Design your legacy today.

God Uses Us to Bless the Nations

By Dr. Lloyd Kim



"May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God let all the peoples praise you!"

—Psalm 67:1–3a

As the psalmist stands before the presence of God, he recognizes that he and his people have a long track record of unfaithfulness and rebellion toward God. Yet the psalmist knows that God is full of mercy and grace and so he prays boldly for God's blessing for him and his people. The psalmist is asking for these blessings not simply for themselves but so that his people—Israel, God's chosen people—can be a blessing to the nations.

This is the heart of the psalmist. He asks for blessings for his people so that God's way may be known among the earth. He sees all that he has and all that his people have received as a means for extending God's glory throughout creation. The psalmist wants to see what God wants to see: the nations reconciled to God and all the peoples praising God for His glory, majesty, and goodness. This can only happen when those who have experienced God's blessing and grace make His way known on the earth.

God has lavished us with spiritual and material blessings. Psalm 67 indicates that the reason God has blessed us is so that we can bless others. God chooses to use us to extend his grace to the nations. We are the means by which God heals people who are hurting and who are sick by bearing witness to His saving power. He has commissioned all of us to go and make disciples of all nations and to teach them everything that Jesus has done on our behalf.

We obey this command of Jesus by praying like the psalmist, going to the nations, or giving generously to missions. And God uses our prayers and gifts in ways we can't even imagine for the advancement of His kingdom.

So can I ask, "How is the Lord challenging us to steward our blessings for the kingdom's advance?"

Let us continue to ask how God might use us to bless the nations and extend His glory throughout creation. Let our prayer be, "Let the people praise you, O God let all the peoples praise you!"

Lloyd Kim



However, frequent tax law changes often cause confusion. Fortunately, there are specific year-end giving strategies that can help you fulfill your stewardship goals and maximize your tax benefits. Let's take a high-level look at how year-end giving can provide benefit for you as well as the ministries you choose to support.

1. Charitable Deduction Tax Savings

You can receive an income tax deduction for qualified gifts you make to a qualified charity. When your gift is cash, you are allowed to deduct up to 60% of your adjusted gross income, if you itemize when filing your taxes. Any excess can be carried over for up to five additional years.

Cash is easy to give, but perhaps your cash resources are limited. Charitable deduction tax savings are also

Inside Ukraine, MTW is mainly working through the EPCU churches, 12 of which have been converted to diaconal aid centers. Every month MTW distributes funds to the EPCU pastors and church leaders so that they can support their families and communities. Besides the humanitarian supplies the churches store in their buildings, they have served as temporary shelters for over 300 people in their communities. The buildings have also been equipped with generators, heaters, and other resources to help their communities survive the harsh Ukrainian winter.

Gifts from MTW donors have not only provided material resources for the war-torn country, but also have allowed the Church in the region to minister to Ukrainians with the Word of God. In other words, the Church is still functioning. Even though about two-thirds of each congregation is dispersed, 12 of the 15 EPCU churches are hosting online and in-person worship services for their members. MTW missionaries and Ukrainians in the refugee centers regularly gather for worship and Bible study.

“In the midst of trying to care for people, you want to help them. And the greatest answer to address their deepest need is what we have in the gospel and we’ve seen that go

forward,” said MTW Ukraine missionary Doug Shepherd.

MTW Donors Secure the Future for the Ukrainian Church

In May, the EPCU was able to host its first presbytery meeting since Russia’s full-scale invasion. The pastors met for worship, prayer, and to discuss the many challenges the Ukrainian Church is facing. Until the war ends, their relief work probably won’t change. However, they are confident there will be a post-war Ukraine and the Church needs to be prepared.

“There is basically a new beginning about to happen,” said MTW Ukraine missionary Kirk Norris. “I do believe and think Ukrainians are going to be more open than they ever have to hearing the answers that God provides.”

The plans for post-war Ukraine center around healing the people’s emotional, spiritual, and physical wounds and building stronger ministers, ministries, and churches. The denomination already sees opportunity for new ministry efforts. Thanks to the support in the West, MTW is preparing now to launch these efforts in partnership with the EPCU by training and mobilizing a plethora of counselors, builders, and church planters.

MTW hopes to give those who have been working throughout the war a break and an opportunity for counseling. They are preparing to help local Ukrainian churches by providing workers and resources to repair damaged buildings, welcome their dispersed members home, and train new church leaders. Finally, their plan is to plant churches in a post-war Ukraine. Their goal is to see the EPCU denomination double to more than 30 churches in ten new cities.

“Trauma has touched every house in Ukraine,” said Jon. “We are praying that the spiritual ground is laid and that people will be asking and pursuing a higher security—a more secure foundation that only Christ can provide.”

None of these plans are possible without the partnership of believers in the West. God has used the prayers and financial gifts of MTW donors to preserve the Church in Ukraine and enable their ongoing work. This partnership between MTW supporters in the West, MTW missionaries in Eastern Europe, and MTW’s Ukrainian national partners is a powerful testimony to Ukraine and the rest of the world of the care, support, and compassion broken people can find in God’s kingdom. ■

We trust you have found this issue of **Partners in Planning** to be helpful. We look forward to answering any questions you may have about the information shared here.

Please take time now to complete the response card to receive information on our estate design and gift planning services. We are here to help you in any way we can.

Please write or call our office to let us know how we can be of assistance.

For will and estate planning purposes, our legal name and address are:

Mission to the World (PCA), Inc.
1600 North Brown Road
Lawrenceville, GA 30043
(678) 823-0028
estategift@mtw.org | www.mtw.org

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