GIVING FROM
Your IRA
MAY *SAVE* YOU MONEY!

If you have an **Individual Retirement Account (IRA)** and are age seventy (or getting close), you should know about a way you can give to your local church that will strengthen the church's ministry and produce tax savings for you! Here are some important facts you should know.

1. INDIVIDUAL RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS HAVE COME OF AGE (MIDDLE-AGE).

IRAs have been around since 1974, though in the beginning, they were only for folks who didn't have any other pension coverage. A bill in 1981 made all workers and their spouses eligible for these accounts. That's a solid forty-plus years that people have been putting money away without having to pay federal taxes on it. (That part is important.)

2. YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU OR LEAVE YOUR MONEY THERE FOREVER.

The understanding was that those folks could access that money without a penalty as early as when they turned fifty-nine and a half, but when they reached seventy and a half, they were required to start taking at least a minimum amount out each year—**"required minimum distributions" or RMDs**. At the outset of the coronavirus pandemic, the age for these RMDs was raised to seventy-two. Since participants didn't pay tax on the money when they put it in their IRAs, they are required to pay tax on it when money comes out. **RMDs can push some people into a higher tax bracket**. That can be avoided...

3. GIVE IT TO THE CHURCH; AVOID PAYING THE TAXES.

In 2006, pension protection legislation allowed for tax-free use of RMDs for charitable contributions, saving the tax that people would have had to pay when they took this money out of their IRA accounts. These are called **"qualified charitable distributions" or QCDs**. Here's an important distinction: these are NOT tax deductions. They do not provide a charitable deduction regardless of whether you itemize deductions. The tax benefit is

the ability to exclude the donated distribution from taxable income! Here's an example: If you were planning to give $1000 per month to your church, you don't qualify for more than the standard deduction amount, and you are at the 12% tax bracket—giving that amount from your IRA (as a QCD) will save you $1440 in taxes! If you are in the 22% tax bracket, the savings will be $2640!

4. FROM IRA TO "MY UMC"—NEVER IN MY POCKET!

With a qualified charitable distribution (QCD), a check goes directly from your IRA to your church or the charity you select. Many people who are facing RMDs that will have tax implications could pay all their annual tithe or offering at one time, hopefully early in the year, through their QCD and never have to show it as income.

5. YOU DON'T HAVE TO WAIT FOR 72 TO DO THE QCD!

While Congress recently raised the age for RMDs to seventy-two, QCDs can happen for anyone who has reached the age of seventy and a half. Retirees who are over that age and want to continue to be generous to their local church should consider a qualified charitable distribution.

6. MOST TAXPAYERS NO LONGER GET A TAX BREAK FOR CHARITABLE GIVING.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that went into effect in 2019 and 2020 included an increase in the standard deduction—it nearly doubled. That standard deduction is the threshold that your itemized deductions have to exceed to make itemizing worthwhile. It left many people better off, but with 90% of taxpayers taking the standard deduction (which does not require any evidence of charitable giving), it eliminated a tax-incentive regarding charitable donations for most of us (not to say that this is the main reason people give to the church). Inviting retirees in the seventy-plus group (who use the standard deduction) to consider using the qualifying charitable distribution may reduce or eliminate the tax that they might have to pay on RMDs. Yet many will not know of this option unless your church makes the invitation!

We encourage everyone to discuss this with a financial planner, tax consultant, or attorney—and be sure to let your family know! It could be a savings for you and a blessing to your local church!

DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES
The United Methodist Church