



## Circuit Rider Dispatch



Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church Foundation, Inc.

### January Cold Snap Takes Breath Away

January 2014 was certainly a cold month with a visit from the polar vortex. The financial markets were also chilly and took a breath from the outstanding gains of 2013 with the S&P 500 falling 3.4% during January, while the aggregate U.S. Bond market gained 1.5%. For perspective, this loss in stocks really just erased the gains during the last two weeks of December. Warren Buffet once said, *"If anyone tells you they know where the market is heading this year, they're either a fool or they're lying."* Over the past 24 years, the S&P 500 Index has averaged a gain of 9.45% per year, but over that period stocks were negative at some point during the year during 14 of the 24 years. The lesson is that short-term movements tell us nothing about where the market will wind up at year end. In order to benefit from the longer-term gains we have to be willing to ride the waves.



Not all accounts placed in the Foundation by churches and ministries are long-term investments, so we offer the [Short-Term Income Fund](#) (up .69% in 2013), which holds no stocks. While it does not pay a fixed return, it provides a relatively safe return by pooling investments primarily in shorter-term bonds. While our Balanced Growth Fund (up 18.18% in 2013) is still the preferred investment for endowments, any new account may be dollar-cost averaged over a period of months or even a year in combination with the Short-Term Income Fund or our Money Market Fund. Investors are not limited to a single choice, but may mix or match as they might choose.

If your church or ministry would like to know more about our [investment options](#) or would like us to visit, please let us know. There is never a cost or obligation for our visits or materials.

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#### PERSONAL PLANNER

##### Life Insurance - Costs and Benefits

Five Reasons Why You May Not Own Life Insurance. Let's look at the "top five" reasons people give for not owning life insurance. Let's look at the "top five" reasons [Read More](#)

#### SAVVY LIVING

##### Work-At-Home Employment Opportunities for Retirees

Can you recommend some popular work-at-home jobs for retirees? I'm interested in earning a little extra cash, but would also like to stay at home and have a flexible schedule. [Read More](#)

#### YOUR PLAN

##### Bush Holley

Lawrence (Bush) Holley was a bit different. He wore a fumanchu and slept... [Read More](#)

## WASHINGTON NEWS

### IRS Ready for Income Tax Returns

On January 31 the IRS announced that it is prepared to receive 2013 income tax returns. The return season will be from that date until Tuesday, April 15, 2014, unless taxpayers file for an extension. [Read More](#)

## FINANCES

**Stocks** - Walt Disney Regains Its Financial Magic [Read More](#)

**Bonds** - Treasuries Rise as Jobs Report Disappoints [Read More](#)

**CDs and Mortgages** - Interest Rates Decline on Housing Data [Read More](#)

### Check-Up for Healthy Estate Planning

The following are our recommendations for individuals who consider what must be done here on earth to enter the Pearly Gates well, in respect to how large of a burden we leave behind settling our affairs. It is amazing how so many of us spend so little time preparing and planning for the inevitable and through our denial leave so much up to chance or possible additional tax consequences. We encourage you to follow the checklist below and in doing so ensure that any plans you have already made are up-to-date.

- Review your current will or trust (if any) and consider any changes in the people, plans, and purposes that your plan provides for. If you do not have a written will, regardless of the size of your estate, establish one as soon as possible.
- Make a written record and inventory of the contents of a safe-deposit box and all important papers. Give a copy to a trusted family member or personal representative.
- Review all beneficiary designations or IRA's, retirement plans, and life insurance policies to make sure they are current.
- Review your durable power of attorney for healthcare and living will.
- If you have dependents, make sure you are comfortable with the guardian named for your children or a loved one who is disabled.
- Review your investments, bank accounts, and other financial assets. Are your funds working for you? Are costs appropriate?
- Consider adding your church or favorite ministry to your estate plan as part of your legacy.



The Holston Conference Foundation provides upon request, the Personal Information Record Booklet. It is a very helpful record that an individual completes covering many of the items mentioned above as well as addresses many issues we don't normally consider. You can obtain an online copy by clicking [here](#) or request one to be mailed to you by sending an email to [paulbowman@holston.org](mailto:paulbowman@holston.org). If your church wishes to provide multiple copies for members, we prefer providing a program at your church **for free** that addresses many of these issues directly.

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