



All great deeds begin as little seeds.

“With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

Mark 4: 30-32

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Think of the pivotal moment when a seed that has been resting dormant in the ground first cracks open to throw off initial shoot or tiny roots. Though subtle and rarely noticed, this significant “birthing moment” precedes months or even years of growing time. And, while this seed come to fruition, there are intermittent glimpses of what the plant, flower, or tree will one day become.

In life, we catch such glimpses of future possibilities when seedling dreams first appear in the gardens of our experiences. Whether a fleeting vision or whispered prophecy, these moments pulse with a clarity that strikes at the very core of our being. They might be:

- The spark of inspiration when a future dancer takes the stage for her first recital.
- The first instant that the boy who may one-day become a pro surfer hangs ten on his first wave.
- The electric encounter shared when two life partners make their first eye contact.
- The fire that ignites when a child living in poverty decides consciously or unconsciously that he will give his future family a different life.

Each moment becomes a defining one – one in which a dream seed was first planted in the soil of our reality.

Our Foundation’s “gardeners” are many. Among the first ones was Raymond Gee. Mr. Gee was in his 80s when, after having spent many years as a visionary for our church, he joined eleven fellow leaders in 1964 and formed the Foundation. His later gift of a 50-acre citrus orchard in the Texas Rio Grande Valley was literally a seedling of great promise for our Foundation’s endowment.



Helen W. Watt, a long-time member of our Church, is credited for having solicited many of the original gifts that formed our Foundation. The first female officer and director of our

Foundation, she knew that the little seeds of small donations would yield future bounty just as the larger, more mature legacy gifts she inspired immediately bolstered the Foundation's corpus.

We think of it as organic giving: planned giving, the basis of the Foundation, prepares the soil for legacy gifts of any size that are the seeds of future harvests. Qualities like patience, dedication and commitment are the rain, sun and CO₂ of endowment growth. Whether it takes one year to germinate or 30 years, the Foundation and our Church reap the rewards. We may not even be around by the time the fruits of some families' efforts are seen.

But our faith in the future is confirmed by the promise pivotal moments, generous gifts and dedicated efforts provide. Thank you for being a part of this beautiful garden, First United Methodist Church.