

Acworth UMC Looks to the Future by Enrolling in the Legacy Ministry Webinar Program



A lot can happen in 155 years. Acworth UMC has avoided being burned by Sherman's Army, relocated twice and worshipped in five sanctuaries. This caring family of faith has experienced seasons of prosperity and weathered turbulent times.

In the early 1990s, Acworth UMC built its current sanctuary that still carries a \$1.7 million debt. "We overbuilt, under-planned and had a pastoral change that affected church unity," said senior pastor Rev. James Gwin. "Although we have good financial policies, generous people and great leadership, finances have been a constant struggle for the last 20 years."

James knew it was time to address the church's financial challenges and turned to the Georgia United Methodist Foundation for help.

"It was a God-thing. I had mentioned starting an endowment fund in the finance meeting, and then one-week later I got the Foundation's newsletter. It was an answer to my prayer," James said. "The finance chair talked to Nancy Young (Foundation director of fundraising services and co-founder of the Legacy Ministry Webinar Program). He called me back and said, 'We need to enroll in this.'"

Concern for future generations was also a motivating factor. "Other people helped build all of this for us, and we are trying to step forward and do our part so we can leave the church in better shape for future generations," James said. "If I give \$1,000 to the church as a love gift to buy a van, I'm giving it to God, but eventually it will be gone. But when you give to the legacy fund, that money is still working 100 years from now. We have a huge campus with some aged buildings. By forming the Faith Foundation Fund, we will have an income source built over time that will provide the funds needed to make repairs."

Legacy Ministry Webinar Program Benefits

Every month for 12-months, eight members of Acworth UMC participate in a 45-minute Legacy Ministry Webinar that provides a step-by-step process for establishing an endowment. Senior pastor Rev. James Gwin shares the benefits of enrolling in this program.

1. It has been a blessing. It has kept us organized and focused, yet the process itself is very simple.
2. It got the laity involved and excited and freed me up for ministry.
3. The Foundation provided us with tangible resources that we could easily edit and adapt toward our unique situation, which saved us untold hours of work.
4. We had the expertise of the Foundation, which understands tax laws, charitable giving and how Methodist churches are organized.

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