

Legacy Ministry Helps Villa Rica First UMC Fund Future Ministries



After successfully directing a capital campaign on behalf of Villa Rica First UMC at The Garden in 2012, Georgia United Methodist Foundation Director of Fundraising Services, Nancy Young, recommended leadership enroll in the Legacy Ministry program, which is a 12-part webinar series that helps churches start an endowment.

"The Foundation gave us the ability to sell a 100-year-old sanctuary and move into a brand new facility that we have already outgrown. We still have a sanctuary and community center to build over the next five years. We are partnering with the Foundation to make sure resources are there to fund front-line ministries and to help us maintain a strong financial base during economic downturns," said lead pastor Rev. Derek Porter.
"Charitable giving is changing as people's savings patterns are changing. Churches need to develop new revenue streams and modes of operating. This Legacy Fund will insure that we are creative in how we do future ministry."

Before retirement, Villa Rica First UMC member Suzanne Hurlbut served as a financial advisor for 18 years. In 2013, she completed the year-long Legacy Ministry program. She currently chairs the permanent endowment and planned giving ministry committee.

"The idea of a permanent endowment fund is that it goes on in perpetuity. The principal of the fund itself is not touched. What you are contributing becomes a legacy that will benefit the church now and in the future. It gives members an opportunity to support and grow ministries that they had been a part of after they are gone," she said. "Our goal is to utilize those funds outside of the operational needs of the church, which should be covered by the budget."

Suzanne recommends other churches, regardless of size, participate in the Legacy Ministry program. "The webinar has taken us step-by-step through the process of establishing an endowment fund. It was excellent, very clear and concise," she said. "The Foundation gave us materials, templates and instructions for creating the proper documents. They also provided us with a variety of gift options for people to consider."

"During the webinar, we review the various ways that church members may give a legacy gift today or upon their death. We also explain that the most effective way of asking someone to give is by asking them to "join you" by committing first," Nancy said. "I was so impressed that Suzanne gave the first legacy gift. Since she is over 70%, the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2013 enabled her to take a tax-free distribution from her IRA and give it directly to the Foundation for the benefit of Villa Rica First UMC's endowment."

"When Derek asked me to chair this committee, I felt it was important that I be an example," Suzanne said. "My husband and I are comfortable, but we are not wealthy. I simply felt inspired to be the first person to step forward."

Derek is deeply appreciative of her generosity. "Suzanne is battling cancer right now. She and her husband, Dick, are tremendous leaders with servants' hearts," he said. "They are leading the way to make sure that Villa Rica will be strong over the next 100 years just as it has been over the past 100 years."

For more information on the Legacy Ministry program, please contact Nancy Young at 678-708-6601 or nyoung@gumf.org.