

Faithful People Living Generous Lives at Grandville United Methodist Church

Sue Nielsen has been an active member of the Grandville UMC for over 14 years. She currently serves as the Finance and Endowment Chair for the church. Sue is also active in providing audits for churches in her conference. You might say she knows a thing or two about church finance.

Rev. Wayne Barrett, retired President of the UM Foundation, helped the church set up the endowment charter. Sue shared with me that they decided right away that "the fund would not be accumulating wealth, but rather for charitable endeavors." That choice set the framework for a "big" return on their how the church approached their finances and this investment.

The church has had endowment funds for many years. During that time, returns have been good--ranging from 12-20%. Those returns coupled with the church's faithful commitment to not spend those funds on routine expenses lead the church to a generous opportunity.

Sue was looking for a cause for the church to support with these earnings. Their pastor, Rev. Ryan Weiland, suggested they consider helping a new member attending seminary at United Theological University in Dayton.

Sue said the church, under Rev. Weiland's leadership, really shined during the pandemic and quickly pivoted to offer services online. She felt like helping another future pastor would be the most beneficial way to grow the church and honor his service. Sue stated that she had prayed for putting their earning to good use. She stated, "I had prayed for some direction for putting our money to good use and God couldn't have been more succinct with his answer!"

Sue said in addition to helping this seminary student with his education, they are going to be able to help cover the cost of replacing the churches 55-year-old heating system...all from accumulated endowment earnings.

Sue advises other churches to invest whatever amount they can in the Foundation's pooled funds. "It is not about the money. It is about changing the community and doing God's work." She advised resisting to spend the interest earned immediately on routine bills , instead letting it really grow for a "bigger" opportunity.

Sue said her job as Finance Chair is easy. She trusts her pastor, the and fellow committee members. She stated, "the investment part is easy thanks

to the Foundation." Sue believes investing faithful and generously becomes "found money".

Like many other investors, Sue appreciates the Foundation's investment funds not only for the attractive return on investment, but also for following the social principals of the UMC as part of the investment strategy.

Grandville UMC is a great example of **Faithful People Living Generous Lives and we are excited to be a partner with them in ministry.**