

## Stockbridge First UMC Strengthens its Financial Future!

**BY NANCY YOUNG, GUMF VICE  
PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT**

Lead Pastor Rev. Andy Postell and his top-notch financial team at Stockbridge First UMC have worked hard to strengthen the Church's financial health.

When Postell learned about the Georgia United Methodist Foundation's Legacy Ministry Training in 2017, he recruited Jim McSpadden to chair this initiative. McSpadden, along with a dedicated team, completed this program in record time. Since then, GUMF has



**Rev. Andy Postell, Lead Pastor  
of Stockbridge First UMC**

offered three free Wills Clinics to church members who later receive additional help completing their estate planning documents.

Postell and McSpadden also partnered with James (Jim) F. Pope, GUMF Director of Lending, to refinance their loan with more favorable terms saving the Church thousands of dollars each year.

Postell says, "GUMF has been a tremendous resource for our church. By giving us the tools to talk about legacy giving and by refinancing our loan, GUMF has helped Stockbridge First attain a better financial position that will impact our community for generations to come."

## Does Your Church Have a Cemetery? You Should Read This!

**BY REV. STEPHEN A. WALDORF,  
GUMF REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT**

Cemeteries are sacred places. In many churches, several generations of the same family are resting there. At the same time, cemeteries can become a burden for a church to maintain properly and even bring liability if someone is injured there.

The South and North Georgia Conference treasurers strongly urge churches to form a cemetery association, which can be the best way to sustain and maintain a cemetery until Christ returns! Here is how a cemetery association works.

The church which owns the cemetery forms and incorporates a separate cemetery association to maintain and manage the cemetery.

The association can include non-church members, such as family members of those interred in the cemetery. The association elects officers, adopts rules for the cemetery's administration, and applies for tax-exempt status so that contributions may qualify for tax deductions.

Once set up, the church deeds the cemetery to the association. The church no longer has liability for the cemetery. The cemetery association manages the cemetery. And the association can set up a maintenance fund to provide for the expenses of the cemetery.

In the sad event of a church closing, the cemetery association will continue to own and manage the cemetery. To learn more, please call me, Rev. Stephen A. Waldorf, at 478-746-9688 ext. 124 or 478-747-0042.

## Is it Time for Your Church's Annual Investment Checkup?

**BY CALVIN R. STAMPS, GUMF  
TRUSTEE AND INVESTMENT  
COMMITTEE CHAIR**



**Calvin R. Stamps, Founder,  
Managing Partner and Portfolio  
Manager of Bretwood  
Capital Partners**

Now is a great time to review your church's investments. With all the

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## Your Church's Annual Investment Checkup

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volatility in the markets, a dovish tilt from central banks, uncertainties over the global economy and geopolitical headwinds, now is the ideal time for your church's financial leadership team to look carefully at your investments.

Here are some of the things you will want to consider.

**1) What is the performance of your investments?** How do your returns compare to benchmarks? Often returns are calculated on calendar dates. You might want to look at returns over a three- to five-year period. Note also that some firms quote returns before their fees and some after.

**2) Review the purpose of your investments.** Are you looking for long-term appreciation with a smaller annual distribution or are you investing for a shorter term when you will need most of the money? Income is generally the sum

of market appreciation, dividends and interest income. Annual distributions on true funds are often a spending ratio applied to the rolling average of quarterly market values of the fund. Depending on the purpose of your investment, you may want to consider changes to your investment mix.

**3) Review your appetite for risk.** Equity investments over time generate higher returns. On the other hand, equities also offer higher volatility in line with stock market swings. As a result, the market may be up or down when you need the money. Fixed income securities and funds also carry market risk. However, the degree of change in their market values is historically much less. Investing in certificates avoids market risk. In general, the higher the risk, the higher the expected return and vice versa.

**4) Review your provider.** Are you getting the service you expect? How do your provider's fees compare to others? Does your provider abide

by the socially responsible investing principles required of United Methodist institutions under "The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church?" Are there hidden fees? Does your provider help by answering questions and providing documents?

**5) Revisit your asset allocation.** As the markets have appreciated this year, asset values have increased significantly. You may need to rebalance your portfolio to bring your asset allocation back into your desired target balance. Ideally, you should rebalance if your asset mix has tilted too heavily toward stocks or bonds by at least five percentage points.

If you would like to learn how to conduct an investment review, please contact Rev. Keith E. Lawder, GUMF President/CEO, at 770-449-6726, 877-220-5664, or [klawder@gumf.org](mailto:klawder@gumf.org) (North Georgia) or Rev. Stephen A. Waldorf, GUMF Regional Vice President, at 478-746-9688 ext. 124, 478-747-0042, or [swaldorf@gumf.org](mailto:swaldorf@gumf.org) (South Georgia).

## Parkinson's Support Group Hosts Wills Clinic at Skidaway Island UMC

BY NANCY YOUNG, GUMF VICE PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT

Finding ways to help others has been a lifelong endeavor for Russ Peterson, a member of Skidaway Island UMC. Having heard a presentation by the Georgia United Methodist Foundation at his church on ways to give, Peterson had the idea of offering a Wills Clinic to the persons who attend the Parkinson's Support Group.

Peterson, along with his dear friend Jim Hazel, who is a Parkinson's patient, formed the group over three years ago. The Parkinson's Support Group meets at Skidaway Island UMC once per month.

In June, I was invited to lead a Wills Clinic for the persons attending the Parkinson's Support Group. The participants were very interested to learn more about estate planning and the documents needed to provide peace of mind to their families.

"The participants thought that the Wills Clinic was excellent," says Peterson. "The discussion was very helpful. Six participants indicated that they will be reevaluating their

estate plans."

What ministries are you passionate about? If you would like to learn about the many ways you might support your church or favorite ministry through your estate, or if you would like to host a Wills Clinic at your church, please contact me, Nancy Young, at 678-708-6601 or [nyoung@gumf.org](mailto:nyoung@gumf.org).

Our Wills Clinics cover:

- Wills and Trusts.
- How Assets are Transferred.
- Georgia Advance Directives.
- Powers of Attorney.
- Ways to Give.
- Resources to Use to Complete Your Estate.

# GUMF Awards Tens of Thousands of Dollars in Scholarships Each Year

BY NANCY YOUNG, GUMF VICE PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT

Thanks to the generosity of our donors and our partnership with the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation, the Georgia United Methodist Foundation gives away tens of thousands of dollars in scholarships each year.

Since 2011, GUMF has awarded 729 United Methodist Dollars for Scholars scholarships totaling \$601,700 to Georgia United Methodist students attending United Methodist colleges, universities and seminaries.

Interested students are encouraged to apply on the UMHEF's website at

[www.umhef.org](http://www.umhef.org) between January 1 and March 1 of each year.

Here's a thank you note from one of our recent scholarship recipients.



Tedy Dasher, Member of Oak Grove UMC

Dear Rev. Lawder,

*I want to thank you for the generous scholarship award from the Georgia United Methodist Foundation. It was a pleasure for me to apply to the United Methodist Dollars for Scholars Program. My church (Oak Grove UMC in Decatur) is a big part of my life, and Emory University is my dream school to attend. Thanks to this scholarship award, this will help with my finances at Emory. I plan to study neuroscience because I like science and math. I promise to stay in touch with the Foundation. Thank you so much again!*

Sincerely,  
Tedy Dasher



## Top 10 Things No One Told Me About Being the Finance Chair!

BY REV. KEITH E. LAWDER, GUMF PRESIDENT/CEO

Have you ever said yes to serving your church and then discovered there is not a job description for what you are being asked to do? I often hear this from frustrated church finance chairs after something has gone wrong. So here are 10 things you might want to know.

**1)** The list of finance committee chair duties is in section #258 of "The Book of Discipline of The

United Methodist Church."

**2)** Loads of useful information, forms and checklists can be found on your Conference website.

**3)** The roles of finance chair, church treasurer, and financial secretary are meant to be distinct and separate. Consolidating these three roles is not only asking a lot of one individual, but it can also create big problems if something goes wrong.

**4)** Having two unrelated people both count the offering and complete the deposit slips each week protects the church and the individuals who serve in this way.

**5)** Supervising the person who writes the checks and keeping close track of expenses protects the church from fraud. Nearly one in five churches experiences some form of financial fraud each year.

**6)** File complete and accurate financial reports on a timely basis. It is not only sound practice, but it also helps to validate your pastor's

stewardship of church resources.

**7)** Proper documentation leaves a track record of who did what when. Regularly review your financial documents as well as the people authorized to sign and provide approval. The goal is to reduce the possibility that document deficiencies will slow a transaction. This practice also guards against allowing someone who is no longer a signer to authorize a transaction.

**8)** Reports are important. It is worse than embarrassing to discover that your church is in financial trouble, and no one saw it coming.

**9)** Pastors should not be signers on church checks!

**10)** The church finance chair is responsible for maintaining adequate records and insurance, and for ensuring that the treasurer makes all tax and payroll transactions on a timely basis.

Yes, being the finance chair is a big job! But it is also a wonderfully rewarding way to serve your church.



## Is it Time for Your Building Checkup?

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As we age, our bodies start to wear out. As we get older, it is a good idea to get a regular medical checkup. The same is true for church buildings. What you do not know about your building could be costly. A building checkup, or facility condition assessment, requires expert help. Here is a checklist for a church building checkup:

- 1. DOCUMENTS:** Do you have all building records? Do you have copies of the plans for each expansion and renovation? Are all plans, property surveys, deeds and legal descriptions stored safely, so you can get them when you need them? Scan your important documents to a secure cloud storage platform, and store the originals in a safety deposit box or fireproof safe. Valuable records are called “valuable” for good reason.
- 2. HISTORY:** It is important to know when each building phase was constructed and when the most recent improvements were completed so you will have some idea of when to schedule upcoming maintenance.
- 3. ROOFING:** Roofing wears out. What is the age and life expectancy of the roofing? Do you have adequate funds set aside for roofing replacement? Should you consider replacement roofing with a longer life expectancy?

**4. HVAC:** How well is the air conditioning and heating system working? What is the age of each major component and when were they last serviced or replaced? Do you have funds in reserve to replace HVAC equipment as it wears out? Have you considered an annual maintenance contract? Does the age of your HVAC system indicate it may be inefficient? Is it possible that the cost of more efficient equipment could be recovered in a reasonable time if new high-efficiency equipment were installed when existing equipment wears out?

**5. ELECTRICAL:** What is the condition of the electrical system? Does it meet code and is it safe? Do you have old inefficient lighting that could be replaced with much higher efficiency lighting? One efficiency upgrade being implemented by churches includes retrofitting major building areas with motion-sensor light switches so lights are on only in rooms that are occupied. Could the operational savings pay for these upgrades? What is the long-term return on the investment?

**6. ENERGY AUDIT:** Answers to these HVAC and lighting efficiency questions can be provided by an energy audit. Having your facility thoroughly inspected by a qualified energy auditor may reveal many potential long-term cost efficiencies. How do current utility costs compare to similar church facilities in your area?

**7. FINISHES:** What is the condition of major finishes, such as carpeting, tile and other flooring materials? What about surfaces that must be regularly painted? When will these finishes need to be replaced?

**8. RESTROOMS:** Are all restrooms clean, and are they easy to keep clean and maintain?

**9. WINDOWS & DOORS:** Are windows and doors in good condition? Do older windows have inefficient single-pane glass? Insulated double-pane glass was first widely used in the 1970s. After 20 or 30 years, the seal breaks down and an ugly film develops on the inside glass surfaces. This means the glass is no longer insulating, and it is time to reglaze or replace windows.

**10. AUDIO:** Is your worship center sound system functioning properly? Can your people hear, without distortions and

echoes?

**11. HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES:** Does your building have any dangerous substances present which could harm building users? What about asbestos? Lead? Mold? A testing lab can check for the presence of these toxic materials.

**12. CODES:** Are there any building code or life-safety problems that could indicate potential hazards to building users? Are smoke detectors, fire alarms, fire extinguishers and other life-safety equipment fully functional? Have they been tested by qualified inspectors? If you have a sprinkler system, are you certain it will function properly in case of a fire?

**13. SAFETY PLAN:** Is there a building safety plan in place? Are there contingency plans for major events such as tornados, earthquakes, fire or floods?

**14. STRUCTURE:** Is the building in good structural condition?

**15. SECURITY:** Is the building resistant to intruders? Are preschool and children’s areas safe and secure? What about the church office area? Consider having a security expert inspect your facilities and recommend ways to make them safer and more secure.

**16. HVAC SECURITY:** Is equipment secure from theft and vandalism? Churches are easy targets for copper thieves. Is unsecured HVAC equipment covered by your insurance?

**17. OBSOLESCENCE:** Are any of your buildings reaching their normal life expectancy? Is it time to start thinking about replacing worn-out portions of your facility that just do not warrant the cost of continued maintenance? Does the condition of your facilities make a poor impression on visitors?

**18. SITE:** What about the condition of the parking lots, drives, paving and landscaping? Does the asphalt paving need to be sealed? Is site lighting fully functional?

**19. SIGN:** Is the main building sign attractive? Is there good directional signage on the site and building interior? You know your way around. Are visitors able to find their way?

**20. INSURANCE:** If a disaster strikes tomorrow, will property insurance coverage be adequate to replace what is lost? Does it include flood insurance?

## Repairs – Renovation – Expansion – Refinance?

BY JAMES (JIM) F. POPE, GUMF  
DIRECTOR OF LENDING, AND  
LORI TUCKER, GUMF LOAN  
ADMINISTRATOR

Does your church parking lot need repaving? Is the roof leaking? Are you considering expanding to accommodate growth? Is your current loan at a high interest rate or coming due soon?

These are some of the typical needs of churches.

The Georgia United Methodist Foundation is here to help!

One of the many services GUMF offers is loans. We can provide new construction loans as well as permanent mortgages secured by the church's land and buildings.

Generally, our rates and terms are more favorable than traditional bank financing. Some of the benefits of using GUMF are:

- Up to 20-year amortization.
- No balloon maturity.
- Interest rate is fixed for the first five years, then reset to GUMF's prevailing rate each five years through maturity.
- No origination fees.
- Typical closing costs include attorney fees, title search, recording fees, and title insurance.
- We do not charge intangible tax on loans since we are a nonprofit organization, resulting in substantial savings.
- No prepayment penalty. Most of our borrowers pay off their loan ahead of schedule.
- In some situations, an independent appraisal is not required resulting in cost savings and closing time.

GUMF has extended loans to

United Methodist churches and organizations throughout Georgia for over 15 years. Loans can range in size from \$25,000 to over \$4,000,000.

In addition to mortgage loans, we can provide financing for loans secured by GUMF investment certificates.

Loan requests usually begin with a call from the pastor, board of trustee chair, or finance committee representative. In our initial conversation, we discuss the church's needs for financing. We review the loan process, which involves the church submitting a loan application. (To submit the church's application via email, please request a writable form). The application includes information on the church's history, growth, leadership, ministries, financial reports, and the need for financing.

Once the completed application is received, we will review the financial information to evaluate the church's ability to repay the loan. We help the church determine the appropriate size loan. Sometimes a smaller loan is appropriate. Or we may recommend completing a capital campaign before starting a project. If current financial performance supports the loan, we can approve quickly and issue a commitment letter. Once the church accepts the commitment, the closing can follow shortly.

### LOAN SUCCESS STORIES

Here are some examples of the favorable comments GUMF has received from churches we have worked with:

#### Atlanta Bethany UMC, Sugar Hill

"When our current lender told us they were no longer doing church loans, we approached GUMF and they helped us refinance our loan providing better terms. We are so

grateful."

#### Bremen UMC, Bremen

"We needed to purchase a new parsonage. GUMF quickly approved our request and closed on the loan. Thanks!"

#### Friendship UMC, Hephzibah

"We contacted GUMF about refinancing our bank loan plus funds for parking lot repaving and other small projects. They helped with the loan process and approved the loan. The parking lot looks great. Thank you GUMF!"

Our mission is to assist churches in growing their ministries and serving their community in the name of Christ. If your church has a new project or wants to refinance its current loan, please call us, James (Jim) F. Pope or Lori Tucker, at 770-449-6726 or 877-220-5664.

## Clergy Financial Literacy Academy Update

BY REV. KEITH E. LAWDER,  
GUMF PRESIDENT/CEO

The initial pilot of our Clergy Financial Literacy Academy last summer was a huge success. We presented our results and course critiques to the cabinets from each Conference. They asked us to find a cost effective way to make this training available to all clergy. We are working with Urban Ministries in Chicago to create an electronic delivery of course materials. Participants can prepare for group sessions using their computer during times that are convenient for their schedules. Case discussions may be held with their groups via teleconference or in-person with a local facilitator. We hope to have the first sessions available late this fall.

# Looking for a Fixed Rate Return on a 1- to 4-Year Investment? Check Out GUMF's Certificate Rates!

RATE	TERM
<b>3.20%</b>	<b>4 Years</b>
<b>2.80%</b>	<b>3 Years</b>
<b>2.60%</b>	<b>2 Years</b>
<b>2.50%</b>	<b>1 Year</b>

Call Carol Johnston, GUMF Controller, at 770-449-6726 or 877-220-5664 (North Georgia) or Rev. Stephen A. Waldorf, GUMF Regional Vice President, at 478-746-9688 ext. 124 or 478-747-0042 (South Georgia), or visit [www.gumf.org/certificates](http://www.gumf.org/certificates) for details.

*Minimum deposit of \$5,000 required. Rates, effective August 1, 2019, are subject to change without notice. Please call for current rates. This ad constitutes neither an offer to sell nor a solicitation to buy the securities described. Offers are made only after receiving and reviewing an Offering Circular.*



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All costs were paid by a sponsor.

## GUMF Bulletin Insert Promotes Great Certificate Rates!

Even though the Federal Reserve is pushing interest rates lower, the Georgia United Methodist Foundation is holding its Certificate Program rates at above-market levels. Why? Loan demand is strong. The certificates we sell fund our loans to churches and other United Methodist institutions. When market rates of interest move, GUMF typically changes its rates on certificates and loans to be competitive. Since we need to sell more certificates to fund anticipated loans, we are delaying repricing until we catch up with loan demand.

This means a great deal for you. How great? Check out the rate chart above! How can you take advantage of this? As a church treasurer or as an individual, you may invest in GUMF certificates if you reside in Georgia and are affiliated with a United Methodist church.

Interested in sharing this information

Bulletin inserts are available at [www.gumf.org/certificates](http://www.gumf.org/certificates).

in your church? To download a bulletin insert, please visit [www.gumf.org/certificates](http://www.gumf.org/certificates).

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## GUMF Contact List

**Endowments, Investment Management and Scholarships**  
Keith Lawder (North Georgia) and Steve Waldorf (South Georgia)

**Loans**  
Jim Pope and Lori Tucker

**Legacy Ministry Training, Planned Giving, Scholarships and Wills Clinics**  
Nancy Young

**Certificates and Investment Information**  
Russell Jones, Carol Johnston and Misty Kush

## Sign Up for Our Weekly E-Newsletter

To receive our "Empower Weekly" e-Newsletter, email [info@gumf.org](mailto:info@gumf.org), visit [www.gumf.org](http://www.gumf.org) or call 770-449-6726 or 877-220-5664.