

## Title: A Journey of Stewardship: Transforming Austinburg Methodist Church's Scholarship Fund

In the quiet halls of the Austinburg Methodist Church, amidst the whispers of aging memories and the weight of stewardship responsibilities, a transformative journey began. For years, the congregation grappled with the question of what would become of their scholarship fund should the church's doors ever close. As they pondered this dilemma, a spark of hope ignited within their hearts, leading them on a path towards partnership and renewal.

During a committee meeting focused on by-laws, the realization struck with poignant clarity. As a small church with an aging membership, they faced the sobering reality that their scholarship fund's future hung in precarious balance. Initially, thoughts turned to charitable donations or bequeathing the fund to their sister church, yet these options felt like a betrayal of their stewardship responsibilities.

Thus began their search for a better solution, a beacon of hope amidst uncertainty. The church's scholarship fund struggled to sustain its mission given the modest annual grants they aspired to offer. It was in this moment of contemplation that they learned of the Community Foundation for the Twin Tiers (CFTT).

With hesitant hearts, the committee ventured forth to their first meeting with CFTT, their expectations tempered by doubts and fears. Yet, as the meeting unfolded, a wave of euphoria swept over them, transforming apprehension into exhilaration. The foundation emerged as the answer they had been seeking, a guiding light illuminating a path towards security and sustainability.

In the embrace of partnership with CFTT, the Austinburg Methodist Church found solace and reassurance. They discovered that within this framework, they could safeguard their scholarship fund, ensuring its perpetuity even in the face of adversity. The autonomy they cherished remained intact, allowing them to uphold the values and vision that had guided their scholarship program from its inception.

Through collaboration with CFTT, the church not only secured the future of their scholarship fund but also paved the way for growth and expansion beyond their wildest dreams. As they navigated this newfound partnership, they found renewed purpose and vitality, emboldened by the knowledge that they had fulfilled their charge as stewards of their community's future.

Inspired by their journey, their sister church, the Knoxville Yoked Church, followed suit, embracing the transformative power of partnership with CFTT. Together, these churches stand as beacons of hope, testaments to the enduring spirit of stewardship and the transformative impact of collective action.

In the annals of Austinburg Methodist Church's history, this chapter shines brightly as a testament to the power of partnership, resilience, and unwavering faith. And as they continue on their journey, they do so with hearts full of hope, knowing that by joining hands with CFTT, they have secured a future filled with promise and possibility for generations to come.