



Laingsburg United Methodist Church
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Pastor Elbert P. Dulworth

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Laingsburg Methodist church breaks ground on new facility

Laingsburg – Laingsburg United Methodist Church turned the dirt Sunday for its new sanctuary and Christian education building project. It was also the church's last Sunday in the 140-year-old sanctuary that has been home to so many of God's disciples over the years, according to Elbert Dulworth, LUMC Pastor.

"Marriages, baptisms, funerals, worship services, Christmas plays, Easter cantatas, talent shows and many more things have taken place within our walls," said Dulworth. "None will be forgotten but will instead be incorporated into the future building design. May God bless us as we move forward!"

LUMC celebrated its 140th birthday Oct. 16, the same day it held a momentous vote to move forward with a new chapter in the facility's long history: to begin the reconstruction and expansion of its sanctuary and Christian education area.

"We want people to know we are open and accessible during construction," explained Dulworth. "We are not stopping ministry for a project that is meant to expand our capacity for ministry with our community."

For example, the church's Advent series – Outside the Box: The Gift That Can't be Contained – continues during Sunday worship services at 10 a.m. It is a unique, multi-media program that teaches worshippers to look outside the walls of the church not just during the holidays, but all year through.

During construction, Dulworth said the church will hold its services in the fellowship hall. The Laingsburg Area Food Bank, LUMC's Sunday School, nursery and vital ministries of the church will continue throughout construction. The outdoor ramp will also be open so disabled folks will be able to access the building, added Pastor Dulworth.

The project is expected to be done in four to six months and is being managed by J.L. Matthews Construction of Laingsburg, along with many local subcontractors.

Work is already underway. A new well has been dug, trees are being removed, offices have been relocated within the building, stained glass windows have been taken out and sent for refurbishing so they can be used in the new sanctuary, and the pews are being sold to organizations that will be able to use them. Demolition of the old sanctuary and library will begin within one to two weeks.

In addition to rebuilding its 140-year-old sanctuary, the church will also have dedicated Christian education rooms for youth and adult programs; new and larger staff offices; handicap accessibility to the sanctuary and better audio-visual technology for worship services. Right now, people in wheelchairs have to sit in the church library outside the sanctuary. And if there are more than 110 people for a service, the library also becomes the place for overflow seating. Acoustics are challenging and there is no way to use video technology in the sanctuary.

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The church began its Building on Faith Campaign in 2009. Since then, an astounding \$400,000 has been pledged, and more than half of that has already been paid. LUMC has also saved a significant amount in its building fund over the years as a result of its first-Saturday-of-the-month chicken dinners. Over the course of nearly 31 years, the dinners have paid for a fellowship hall and parsonage, as well as many other building repairs. Now the proceeds will be used for the new structure.

“In the midst of economically challenging times, we have seen the power of God at work among us. Not only has an old vision been resurrected to complete a three-phase project started in the 1970s, but we have also seen the signs of new life around us through the leadership of our church,” explains Dulworth.

The United Methodist Church requires any congregation wishing to embark on a building project to have one-third of the project cost as cash-in-hand, one-third pledged and no more than one-third financed. LUMC is ahead of this curve, according to Dulworth. It has both the cash and the pledge amounts required for the estimated cost, which is \$775,000.

LUMC is located at 210 N. Crum Street in downtown Laingsburg. Its Sunday worship services are held at 10 a.m. For more information, please call 651-5531 or visit www.laingsburgumc.org.