

# A small church with a growing legacy

On a quiet stretch of road in Orion, Illinois, Beulah United Presbyterian Church has long been a steady presence.

Since 1860, the church has been a place where faith, community, and service intersect. With 59 members, it is a modest congregation by most measures. But what Beulah United may lack in size, it more than makes up for in intention and generosity.

“We have wonderful leadership and an amazing congregation here,” said Tim Fritz, clerk of session since 2012. “There’s a shared feeling of responsibility for the future of our church and our community.”



That sense of responsibility recently led Beulah to take a significant step: establishing The Beulah United Presbyterian Church Endowment. Working in partnership with the Quad Cities Community Foundation, the congregation leveraged a matching opportunity to double their initial investment in the fund, and, in the process, reframe how they think about stewardship and legacy.

“We had some funds from the sale of our manse, and we knew we needed to be thoughtful,” said Dennis Morgan, a member of session and chair of the church’s worship committee. “This was a chance to build something lasting and create a permanent revenue stream that could support the church long-term.”

The idea gained traction quickly, thanks in part to education and outreach. “The Community Foundation staff was so helpful, upbeat, and patient,” Morgan said. “No question was a bad question. For a small church like ours, that kind of support made all the difference.”

Fritz said the Community Foundation’s expertise brought clarity and confidence at a critical moment. “They’re incredibly knowledgeable, but also willing to sit down with you and explain everything. That matters, especially when this is new territory for many in our congregation.”

As the congregation learned more, conversations slowly shifted. Talk about giving became more forward-looking. Members began to consider not just what they could contribute today, but what they might leave behind. “I’ve already made the decision to include the church in my estate,” Fritz said. “For me, it’s about gratitude and about helping ensure this church continues to be part of people’s lives in the future. The idea that a gift can keep giving forever is powerful.”

The endowment is already shaping Beulah United’s culture of generosity. What began as a financial tool has become a catalyst for deeper engagement, sparking conversations about mission, sustainability, and the church’s role in the wider community.

“It’s not a secret,” Morgan added with a smile. “We’re talking about it. And I think that visibility makes a difference. People are more comfortable giving when they understand the impact. It’s a way to express faith in the future.”