

Transitioning for Future Ministry

By Jeff B. Ukrop

In the spring of last year, I was introduced to the transition committee at Westhampton Baptist Church in Richmond. Founded in 1943, Westhampton was planning for its final service in May 2016. In planning for the church's transition, the leadership team looked for ways to extend Westhampton's ministry beyond the scope of an active congregation. With church resources in hand following the sale of its original church property, the Westhampton congregation made the decision to use a portion of these resources to establish a permanent endowment at the Virginia Baptist Foundation.

By establishing the Westhampton Baptist Church Endowment Fund, the members of Westhampton were able to select heartstring ministries that would receive endowment distributions in perpetuity. The foundation's role as trustee is to ensure the fund's principal grows over the course of time, allowing yearly disbursements to benefit ministry well beyond our lives. The foundation has already sent the first annual distribution to the selected ministries. While journeying through a time of transition and into the sunset of a congregation's life cycle can be emotional and challenging, the members of Westhampton

Baptist were able to send a portion of their passion into the future by utilizing a simple, permanent endowment.

The foundation's staff values the chance to work with churches at any point in their lifespan. We are uniquely positioned to assist each church in a manner that respectfully advances



the ministries, whether the church is extending its reach or anticipating a benediction. In Westhampton's case, creating an endowment set the stage to pay forward ministry blessings in the years to come. Put simply, the ministry shadow of Westhampton Baptist Church has been extended, and the foundation is grateful to be a partner in the ongoing journey. ▼



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