Central Baptist Church Rebuilds After Destruction By Tornado

In February 2016, a devastating tornado hit Appomattox, leaving a 13-mile path of destruction including the loss of more than 200 homes and two church buildings. One of those churches was Central Baptist Church, a BGAV congregation which was built in 1893 in the community of Chap. On Sunday, January 28, 2018, Central Baptist Church held a dedication ceremony in its newly rebuilt sanctuary at the same site that was covered in debris and rubble just two years earlier.

The new church building is a tangible, visible testimony to what a community can do when it comes together around one goal as a response to a tragedy. Virginia Baptists were an important part of that community, especially in the beginning stages. When the tornado first occurred, BGAV Disaster Response teams were some of the first to arrive in Appomattox. Volunteers worked alongside members of the community to clean up and provide critical resources to those who were affected.

While the members of Central Baptist Church recovered from the destruction and made plans for the future, the Appomattox Baptist Association hosted the congregation—allowing them to meet for worship and Bible study in their office building. The association also raised funds for the rebuild, and several local churches donated generously toward the effort. Many local companies donated time and materials to the rebuilding effort as well. Donations, along with an insurance settlement, yielded about $550,000 for them to use toward construction of a new facility.
The new church building can accomplish with just 3,700 square feet what the old building did when it had 5,700 square feet. It can perform the same functions because the new, much more modern facility is multi-functional. The congregation will also be able to save money because of several improvements like additional insulation and a new heating and cooling system that is more efficient. Construction also allowed for the addition of a new sound system and other modern technology that wasn’t present in the old building.

Between in-kind donations, volunteer labor, donations, and insurance funds, the church was able to build the new facility without using any of their cash reserves or going into debt. They held their first worship service in the new building on November 26, 2017, which was less than a year after the reconstruction began. Their dedication service in January was a joyous time of celebration; the community came together to witness God’s faithfulness among the people who’ve served and worshipped there for so many years.

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