

TIDINGS



SPECIAL EDITION 2019

TIDINGS

Asbury Tidings is a quarterly publication designed to tell stories of lives being transformed by the power of Jesus Christ. You may read previous issues by visiting www.asburytulsa.org.

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Better Together by the numbers:

TOTAL pledged: \$13,236,784
Total pledges: 935

- 81 non-member household pledges
- 74 additional households made one-time gifts
- 42 first-time givers made pledges
- Youngest pledger: 7 years
- Oldest pledger: 94 years

We need you! Do you have a story of what God has done in your life? Please contact us and tell us a little bit about what God has done. We will all be encouraged by hearing stories of what God is doing in the lives of those around us.

Are you a writer or someone who enjoys writing? The Communications Department is always looking for someone to do an interview and write a story for us Tidings.

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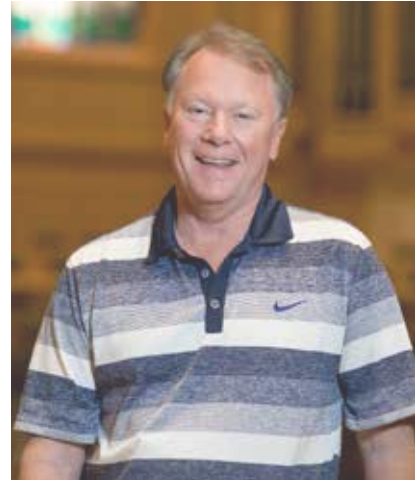
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A WORD FROM TOM HARRISON

This month's Tidings cover picture is of Lila, who was baptized on her eighth birthday. You can tell by the glow on her face that this was a wonderful moment in Lila's life.

I spoke to Lila's mom who told me a great Better Together story about Lila. This 8-year old wanted to buy a couple of guinea pigs. Her parents said they have enough animals already (they live on acreage in Ramona), but Lila still wanted a pair of guinea pigs. Her parents said she would have to save money to buy the critters AND she would also have to pay for the cage and the wheel for them, too. Undeterred, Lila saved \$90. But then, Lila heard about "Better Together." Lila is not a superficial child. She cares deeply about things. She wanted to contribute her \$90 to Better Together. Conflicted about her desires to have the animals and to support her church, she asked her mom, Kelly, if she could postpone her Better Together commitment. Soon after that, Kelly got a phone call from a friend who said that they have two guinea pigs they are having difficulty taking care of and they wondered if Kelly knew of anyone who might want them. Lila ended up able to make her Better Together pledge AND get her animals (and the cage and wheel were thrown in, too).



I know it doesn't always happen like this, but I experienced something similar in making my first two Better Together payments – money twice came "out of the blue" in the exact amount of my monthly pledges. I was amazed. I've heard other similar stories. These stories build faith. And when it happens in the life of a child, it's particularly meaningful.

There is a line in the last book of the Old Testament, *"Malachi: Put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need."* Malachi is talking about tithing. He's making the case that if we tithe, God will bless us. Sometimes that blessing is financial; at other times it is emotional and spiritual. Learning to give joyfully and generously is an enormous blessing. Great things happen with generosity.

Last year I had the privilege of baptizing Lila's older sister, Anna, who is now 12. These girls will both be beneficiaries of our new student ministry building. The Development Center will resource many of our neighbors in substantial ways. I'm grateful we'll be able to help our seniors get into the building in a safer way by making our northeast drop-off covered and closer. Our endowment will provide income year after year after year, forever.

This Tidings magazine is about how Asbury is truly "Better Together" – not only intergenerationally, but through the years. You'll get to read a few of the wonderful stories and learn more of our progress.

Thank you for your response. Hearing Lila's story made me feel that we are truly "HELPING OTHERS FOLLOW JESUS."

In Christ,

Senior Pastor

JUST DO IT!

by LeAnne Erwin



More than 30 years ago, Nike coined the phrase “Just Do It.” So you can imagine my surprise during the Better Together capital campaign, when doing our daily journal readings to come across 1 Chronicles 28:20. It’s the passage where King David is telling his son Solomon to be strong and courageous and DO IT!

It’s the passage where King David is telling his son Solomon to be strong and courageous and DO IT!

That was the moment I was reassured I was doing the right thing in helping to lead this campaign.

I said “yes” before I even knew what I was agreeing to do. I said “yes” because my pastor asked; but then, I doubted my decision.

I certainly can understand how hesitant we are to step up and do what is asked of us.

I certainly can understand how hesitant we are to step up and do what is asked of us. The Bible is filled with examples of people who were chosen despite their abilities. God can use all of us for good if we only trust him.

Abraham was an old man, Moses wasn’t much of a speaker, Jonah didn’t want to go, Martha was a worrier, Zacchaeus was small in stature, Paul had persecuted Christians before he became one. But in the end, God used them for his glory.

That’s kind of how I felt being asked to co-chair the Better Together capital campaign.

That's how the devil works. He makes us doubt our abilities but he also underestimates the power of God.

Even though I told Pastor Tom I would do it, I told Pastor Daniel Dennison at least a dozen times there was probably someone better than me for the task. It wasn't that I didn't want to do it, I just didn't have the courage. That's how the devil works. He makes us doubt our abilities but he also underestimates the power of God.

It wasn't long before I began to see the pieces fall into place. Pastor Daniel joined Asbury after completing a capital campaign for the Wesley Foundation at OU. Asbury member Trey Cooper agreed to co-chair the event. We then secured Horizons Stewardship, an organization that's guided many congregations in building projects and furthering the Kingdom of God. Our early meetings began to give me clarity of the vision and a plan to make it happen. Each meeting began with prayer, asking God to guide our decisions. The Holy Spirit directed our discussions and I began to trust.

Asking people for money is not in my nature. I was never good at fundraising as a kid.

Asking people for money is not in my nature.

I just didn't really believe in the product. But when I started to understand the mission and the vision of the Better Together campaign, it was easy to share the plan. I realized this was a way to help others grow in their faith and in their giving with the ultimate goal of helping others follow Jesus.

Our son Nick was blessed during his time in the Asbury youth group. I want other families to

be blessed as well, so supporting a new student ministry area on the main campus made sense. Outreach has been such a strong emphasis of the church, so transforming Venue68 into a development center will help many of our neighbors in need. Creating better access for our senior adults through a north drop-off zone will help all of us in the long run. While many of us don't think about future financial obligations, strengthening our endowment will ensure we are prepared down the road. Those four components made up the foundation for our Better Together effort. As Pastor Tom cast this vision, many in the congregation have been strong and courageous and stepped out in faith.

Throughout the campaign, I've watched the Lord at work.

Throughout the campaign, I've watched the Lord at work. It's reignited my prayer life to seek His will for my future and the future of our church. It was a blessing to watch as person after person walked on stage during the cardboard testimonies. To hear Kylee Broadhurst during modern worship remind us that it was more than raising money for a building, but transforming and changing lives. I've been touched to hear how the Lord has spoken to so many, encouraging them to be part this journey.

We are now moving into the next phase of the campaign. As the donations begin coming in, it won't be long before we turn dirt and start the building process. It will be an exciting, historic time in the life of our church. Thanks to so many for being willing to give sacrificially. It's been an honor and a true joy to watch it all unfold.

Let's continue to be strong and courageous and DO IT!

BIGGEST BLESSINGS

by Trey Cooper



Have you ever noticed God sometimes puts you in situations or positions where you don't even realize what exactly it is or what you are getting into? This was the case of how I agreed to serve as co-chair of Asbury's Better Together Capital Campaign.

This was the case of how I agreed to serve as co-chair of Asbury's Better Together Capital Campaign.

Pastor Tom and LeAnne Erwin invited me to lunch earlier this year, where they explained Asbury would be undertaking a capital campaign. At that lunch, they explained LeAnne had already agreed to be a campaign chair and they were looking for people to help. Of course, I said I would be happy to help in any way they needed me.

A few weeks later, I was at a Saturday morning Discipleship Community Leadership meeting in the CLC. When it was Pastor Tom's turn to speak, he announced to the room that Asbury was planning to do a capital campaign in the fall. He proceeded to say, "LeAnne Erwin has agreed to be a campaign co-chair, and the other co-chair will be Trey Cooper!"

"Well," I thought, "I guess since Pastor Tom just announced to everyone that I'll be the co-chair, I'm going to be the co-chair!"

"Well," I thought, "I guess since Pastor Tom just announced to everyone that I'll be the co-chair, I'm going to be the co-chair!" Somehow at that lunch earlier in the year, I had ENTIRELY missed that they were asking me to be co-chair of this campaign; but I am so thankful for the opportunity to be able to serve, even if I didn't realize I was accepting it at the time.

That's another thing about God - He will also put you in situations where you think you

will be a blessing, but you are in turn blessed more than you can even imagine. To say the past few months working on the Better Together campaign have been a blessing for me would be an understatement.

I've been blessed with opportunities to meet new people: Our congregation is outstanding. Seeing the love for Jesus, Asbury, Pastor Tom and others displayed by our members has been invigorating.

I've been blessed to hear the stories of sacrificial giving from members: As I said, we have an outstanding congregation of individuals.

I've been blessed to hear the stories of sacrificial giving from members: As I said, we have an outstanding congregation of individuals. When we discussed sacrificial giving, people took it to heart. Seeing the immense generosity displayed is absolutely inspiring as both a member of Asbury and a chair of the campaign.

It's also refreshing as a parent who has children that will benefit from the new student center;

It's also refreshing as a parent who has children who will benefit from the new student center; as a member of the greeting team who helps usher people in from the north entrance; as a patron of Building All Children, an organization that will move into the new development center; and as member of the Asbury Foundation Board, who oversees the endowment for our church.

I've been blessed to work with the Asbury staff: In case you aren't aware, Asbury has a phenomenal group of people who work tirelessly day in and day out, many behind the scenes. This was no exception during the capital campaign. If anything, it was brought to life in a deeper and more meaningful way. From the initial feasibility meetings, to the creation of the sermon journal,

pre-campaign events, sermon planning, event creations (did you attend the Block Party?!?) and final tallying of amounts, everyone was engaged fully and joyfully.

I've been blessed to learn the history of Asbury: Prior to moving to Tulsa, I had been to the Asbury building on Sheridan once, for my wife's grandfather's funeral. And based on attending Asbury for the past 15 or so years, I knew the church had started at Key Elementary. Thus I was aware of the move to Mingo, but through this campaign — and especially the bus tour — I learned so much more about the history of Asbury and how people stepped up in the past and made sacrifices to get us to where we are today. I'm thrilled that we now play an integral part in furthering this generation of Asbury and fulfilling Pastor Tom's vision to set up a succession plan for our church.

I've been blessed to see excitement through children's eyes: Honestly, I think I have been most excited to see how many kids participated in the campaign and how incredibly involved they were. We all know Jesus' affection for children and the part they played in His ministry, so it was no surprise Asbury worked hard to keep our kids and students involved. The weekly sermon journal gave opportunities for discussion at home, prayer as a family, and activities to support the church and the campaign. (How many other times in the year do our children willingly do chores around the house to earn money they won't use on toys?) It was inspiring to see the youngest members of our church involved and engaged, hopefully giving them a sense of ownership and dedication for years to come.

So somehow, without even knowing I was agreeing to it, I stepped into a role that provided the biggest blessings I've encountered in our time at Asbury. My continued prayer is this campaign blesses each and every member of our amazing congregation with strengthened and renewed prayers, committed presence to worship, gifts upon gifts to be treasured and tithed, dedicated and willful service, and witness about what our church can and will do.

Better Together.



*In all your ways acknowledge Him ...
and He shall direct your paths. - Proverbs 3:6*

HOW ASBURY LANDED AT 67TH AND MINGO by Gary Van Fossen

As Asbury began to grow in the mid-1990s, something needed to be done to maintain its growth. There were two immediate options: The first was to purchase the shopping center across 58th Street where the church was already renting various offices for classrooms; the second was to relocate.

Thirty-six acres were found further south on the west side of 62nd Street and Sheridan where Asbury could have put a sanctuary on top of Shadow Mountain with a spectacular view of Tulsa. The Warren Foundation owned that land, and agreed to sell. However, only about 19 of the 36 acres were usable; it would have been very difficult to have access to it up the side of the mountain and it might have had only one entry (off Sheridan). It would cost an enormous amount of money to be able to build on it.

Months went by without a response to Asbury's proposal. When the Warren Foundation's response was received, it said they had re-considered and would not sell the land to anyone. Though they gave the church a \$10,000 check, the vision of Asbury setting atop Shadow Mountain crumbled.

Architect Gary VanFossen, an Asbury member and board trustee had served on the Oklahoma Conference Board of Relocation for many years and was involved in the Tulsa District new church and extension committee. When he heard of the Warren Foundation decision, he got city maps that showed what tracts of land might be available within a three-mile

radius of 58th Street and Sheridan (permission would not be granted from the Tulsa District to move west because of New Haven UMC or south because of Faith UMC); north was problematic because it was an industrial center.

One morning soon after, Gary felt led to drive down 41st, 51st, 61st, 71st and 81st streets, Sheridan, Memorial and Mingo. When he drove past 67th and Mingo, he saw "the land." He told his wife, Dorothy, "That's it. That's our land."

Dorothy responded, "That land's not for sale." But Gary knew the Lord had spoken to him; the only time in his life he felt the Lord had spoken to him like that. He did some research and found that Bill Manley was the owner. He made an appointment with the owner and said that he was a broker and he was looking for land for a church relocation.

When he was asked if the church was on 31st or 61st street, Gary said he couldn't tell because only the pastor and he knew about it, but finally said, "Well, it's Asbury."

Bill said, "I don't go to church very often, but when I do go, I go to Asbury. And I knew you were looking. I've been wondering when you were coming."

Bill always said he felt when he bought the land, he was meant to sell it to a church. He and his wife, Betty, ended up joining Asbury, too. (This often happens in the Bible; a vision is shattered only to have God raise up a new vision).

OUR ORIGINAL BUILDING BY THE NUMBERS

Total square feet:	234,000
Parking spaces:.....	1,321
Size of main worship center:	2,750 seats
Size of chapel:	550 seats
Height of steeple:	184 feet
Number of showers:	10 stalls
Number of offices and workstations:.....	60
Number of trees:.....	275
Seating for gatherings in the CLC:	520
Number of bricks on the facility:	254,000
Number of toilets/urinals:	192
Number of soap dispensers:	119
Number of hand towel dispensers:	75
Amount of ceramic & porcelain tile:.....	41,000 sq. ft.
Number of outdoor benches:	10
Number of doors:	538
Outdoor fountains:.....	2
Playground areas:	3
Total construction cost:	\$30 million
Land cost:	\$3.8 million
Engineering, architectural, etc. fees:	\$5 million
Street improvement - E. 66th St.	\$383,000
Total Land area:	35 acres main site plus 12 acres adjacent land
General design (acoustics, etc.)	\$1 million dollar sound system
Gymnasium-high gym markings:.....	9,000 sq. ft. of Mondo flooring
Youth & childrens areas:	Children- 48,000 sq. ft.
	Youth- 22,000 sq. ft. (This includes the gym)
Main gathering space (Narthex):	7,000 sq. ft. large enough for wedding receptions or even weddings.
Cabling & specialty wiring:	24 miles
Number of light fixtures:	3,121
Electrical wiring:	172 miles
Rebar:	179 tons
Air conditioning:	600 tons
Concrete:	1,944,000 sq. ft. or 6,000 cubic yards or 23,323,000 lbs.
Children's play area:	Encircled with 761 linear ft. of ornamental fence
Roof shingles:	17,200 sq. ft.
Conduit pipe:	200,000 linear ft.

Space Square feet:

Sanctuary:.....	55,000
Chapel:.....	12,000
Children:	48,000
Adult:	25,000
Administration:	20,000
Youth:.....	12,000
Gym & showers:	12,000
Music:	8,000
Maintenance/storage:	5,000
CLC:.....	12,000
Kitchen:	3,000
Gathering, hall, entries:.....	17,000
Misc. (Library, Archives, etc.):	5,000
TOTAL SQUARE FEET:	234,000

God is Counting On Us

By Pastor Andrea Stephens



As a Naval Academy graduate, Rocky Goins understood the importance of doing the right thing, being committed, following orders and other standard mantras of the military.

It comes as no surprise then that he found himself contemplating his pastor's message about stewardship and tithing. At the time, he was the father of a 2-year old girl, with a second daughter on the way. He found himself reflecting about tithing and his responsible response.

Wanting to know more, he dug into the scripture, cross referencing tithing in the Bible.

It became evident to him that tithing was God's standard and that really it was a faith-based challenge to believers to offer to God what was truly His in the first place. He decided it was time to begin giving 10 percent of his income each month.

Aware of the teaching in Malachi 3 where God issues the challenge to be faithful in giving and

then watch to see how He would cause the blessings of Heaven to pour down, he was curious as to what might come from his obedience to tithing. He certainly never expected what happened next.

Rocky worked for his father's Tampa retail real estate development company in Tampa, Fla., which brought many challenges. Because he was the boss's son,

he made sure he was the first to arrive and last to leave, so co-workers did not perceive him as getting a free ride. With his salary of \$55,000 out of his total family income of \$72,000, he thought he was fairly wealthy—until the day his father called him to his home office to tell him that the company was out of cash and that he was going to let go of employees the next morning—Rocky included. His salary would be suspended until the cash flow was reversed.

The cause of the layoff was the result of his father's decision to venture with several equity

partners to pursue the development of a “power center” in Port St. Lucie instead of becoming the preferred developer of Walgreens in Florida, a project Rocky had been working on. To meet the partners’ demands, his father had secretly placed a second mortgage on his home and invested all his liquidity into the project only to have the partners unjustly default on him so they could self-develop the project.

After much heartfelt prayer, Rocky made his father a proposition. Rocky would stay at the company without a paycheck, if his father would allow him to work with an attorney to go after his dad’s equity from the partners. After this, Rocky would move on because he was more risk averse than his father. So, for 10 months, Rocky and his young family lived on less than \$17,000 which barely covered their mortgage. His unemployment and choice to slowly liquidate stocks kept utility bills paid and food on the table.

This was a difficult time. Having to watch every penny, Rocky recalls the cheapest vegetable was sauerkraut, not exactly a family favorite, but one they added to

their menu. They were grateful when someone invited them to dinner (something we can each do for those who lose a job). It was humbling for Rocky to go the Tampa hospital to pre-negotiate the delivery fee for his second daughter since they could not afford the standard fees above their insurance.

Nevertheless, Rocky was committed to tithing. Even though he didn’t know what was ahead for his family, he knew God was with them, and this journey was leading them somewhere good. Rocky leaned on Proverbs 3:5-6, the first scripture he ever memorized.

After several months of weaving through false claims and idle threats, the partners agreed to wire over all the money taken from his dad at the end of that September. The timing was a God-incident as one of the nation’s top real estate development companies located in Maryland offered Rocky a

job with the latest start date to be the first week in October—for nearly double his former salary. The timing and provision were a testimony of God’s faithfulness.

At the end of that year, having given his receipts to H&R Block, the accountant called wanting to meet with Rocky instead of having him just pick up his completed taxes. Curious and perhaps a bit defensive, Rocky agreed. Two days later he found himself sitting across from a man peering over his glasses, with a warm smile. The tax accountant explained that his decades of experience taught him that a person’s taxes revealed much about a person’s character. “Looking at your taxes, I can tell that you went through a lot this year. Jobless for 10 months, a new baby, a new job, a new state, but your charitable donations didn’t cease. I can tell that you have a love for the Lord, don’t you?”

His unexpected words melted Rocky who started to cry. “I love the Lord very much, and He is faithful. I can say with conviction that even though my year has not been a bed of roses, I know that I know that I know that God has been at every crossroads with me, graciously helping me follow His path. My tithe is my promise to God that I will trust Him, with all of my heart.”

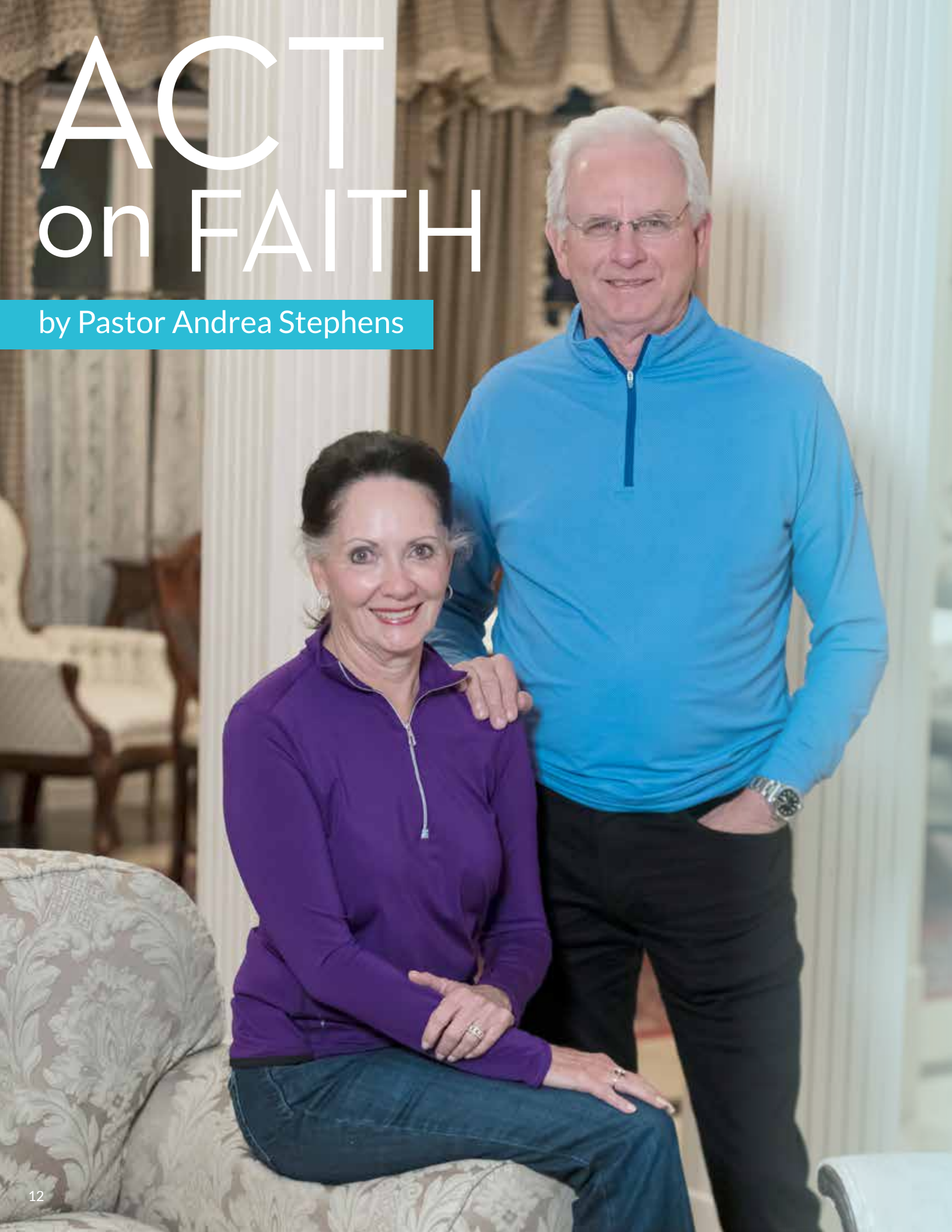
Today, Rocky and his wife, Lynn, find themselves giving beyond 10 percent and have established a fund so that they can remain disciplined and intentional in their giving.

In fact, this helped them in their prayerful decision about what to give to the “Better Together” campaign.

Rocky chuckles when he hears the commercial ask, “What’s in your wallet?” He shares, “We have learned that what is in our wallet and how we use it is a clear indication of our priorities, our faith and our love for the Lord. No one nor any wallet is perfect, but we have learned that God is counting on us to be faithful in our giving, as we continue to count on Him to be faithful to guide and to provide.”

ACT on FAITH

by Pastor Andrea Stephens



Bill and Claudia Abernathy grew up in church-going families that taught them to tithe (tithe means a 'tenth') from a young age.

As teens they were each diligent about earning money. Bill mowed lawns and Claudia taught swim lessons. Ten percent went to the church for their tithes, 10 percent into savings; they didn't question or feel challenged by that.

But, during their college years, they each found themselves getting away from the idea of giving a tithe on a regular basis. Thoughts were on schoolwork, sports and finding their place in the world.

In 1988, years after they married and moved to Tulsa, they joined Asbury with their young family. During these years, their giving to the church was sporadic. They both felt uneasy with this because they knew giving the tithe was God's standard and their heart's real desire. Yet the expenses of a family kept them falling short. That is, until they participated in a focus group on stewardship led by Bill Mason.

"An idea was presented to ease into tithing by increasing one's giving one to two percent per year until a tithe was reached. After praying about it, we felt God was leading us to do this," Bill recalls.

Within a few years they reached their goal of giving 10 percent. They have continued to tithe and to give to Asbury's building campaigns over

the years, most recently "Better Together."

When asked what they would say to younger couples who aren't yet tithing, the Abernathys suggest they start by praying about it together and then step out in faith instead of waiting like they did.

"If you truly feel you are not able to start at 10 percent, start at a lower level and work your way up over a few years. The truth is, we all have fluff in our budgets that we can eliminate, and we actually do eliminate that fluff when the really important things come along. This is one of those really important things," Bill said.

When Bill and Claudia committed to being obedient and honoring God in their giving, they found themselves more committed in other areas of their lives like prayer and Bible study. As they grew in the Lord, they could see His hand at work in their lives.

"Just know that, somehow, your faith will be rewarded—not necessarily immediately, maybe not purely financially, but there's reward for those who act on their faith. **You're going to be really happy when you do this," Claudia added.**



A LEAP OF EXTRAORDINARY FAITH

by Rob Loeber

Sheryl Martin approached the decision the same way she had faced every major decision in her life.

She prayed.

As soon as Sheryl learned about the “Better Together” campaign, she knew she was going to participate. The only question was, how much to pledge?

“I asked God to give me the number, because under my own power, I knew I would come up with something logical and practical for my budget,” Sheryl recalled.

For Sheryl, who is on staff at Asbury as the traditional worship administrative assistant, the budget concerns were real. Sheryl’s husband Kori passed away in August 2018 and his life insurance money was her safety net. Not only was she keeping track of her current expenses, she was also attempting to plan her financial future. The money was intended to last for many years.

As Sheryl continued to pray, she was stunned by the response. God had a different plan for those dollars.

“This number kept popping into my head, and at first, I just dismissed it completely,” Sheryl explained. “God wanted the whole thing. As in, the entire amount remaining in my account.”

Sheryl laughed at the ridiculous notion. Surely, this number wasn’t actually from God. Maybe she simply invented the number in her own mind. God wouldn’t

really ask for that much, would He? After a few weeks of seeing the same number repeatedly roll across her brain, Sheryl started pushing back. She tried to reason with God.

“It was a horrendously scary number,” admitted Sheryl. “It was terrifying to think about giving up everything. **I offered God a portion of the number, and He kept telling me He wanted the whole thing.**”

While she wrestled with God’s monumental request, Sheryl reflected on the way Kori lived his life. As a handyman, Kori never knew where his next job or his next paycheck was going to come from. He had no savings account, no plan for retirement. He may have been missing a 401k, but he possessed an unwavering faith in the provision and providence of his Heavenly Father.

“No matter what, Kori tithed off the top of every single job,” Sheryl said. “He had amazing faith, and God always took care of him. I realized God was calling me to step out in faith and to trust Him completely. He was telling me to be more like Kori.”

Sheryl stopped fighting. She quit trying to rationalize a smaller dollar amount. She ended the negotiation and surrendered to what God wanted.

“In the year since Kori died, I have been fearful about money and it has kind of overshadowed my whole life,” said Sheryl. “I felt like I had been holding my breath for an entire year, and the moment I said, ‘OK God, I’m in,’ this rush of peace came over me and I felt like I could finally breathe again. The feeling of relief was the confirmation that this is truly what God wanted from me.”

With her fears dissolved, Sheryl started to become excited for what God will do with her gift and the pledge of so many other faithful people. She knows God will take care of her in the years ahead, and she has a good reason to walk so confidently. She has already seen how God is going to provide.

“I was thinking to myself; God is either insane or hilarious,” chuckled Sheryl. “The other day I went out to the mailbox and there was a tax refund check that had been delayed and I had totally forgotten about it. I laughed out loud and I decided God is definitely hilarious.”

Sheryl is parting with a significant sum of money. For many, it is a decision full of second guessing, doubts and insecurity. Sheryl has not experienced any of those feelings. Instead, she feels closer to God and connected to Kori in a completely new way. Where there was once fear, there is now joy.

“I don’t know that it’s my act of giving or my act of letting go, but both scenarios involve me opening my hand and my heart and emptying something out of my hand,” realized Sheryl. **“That’s the only way you can give and it’s the only way you can receive something. You can’t grab on to anything with a closed fist.”**

The money donated in the Better Together campaign will fund outreach and missions, as well as expansion projects and many other Asbury programs and initiatives. It will help reach the lost and bring new members into the family of God. **It will also leave a legacy of a church and its people – like Sheryl Martin – living life out on a limb and trading fear for faith.**

THE SPIRIT REJOICED

By Sarah Johnson

At AsburyKids, we know our kids are big givers. They love to give offering each Sunday and are always on top of their game when it's for our annual coat, canned food or school supply drives.

We knew with Better Together, we wanted to do something big. We wanted to give them the opportunity to give in a big way and make their mark on the campaign to build a building they will eventually call their own.

The idea was simple: order dozens of water bottles, let each child decorate one for themselves, and give them one week to fill that bottle with coins and bring it back.

In line with the church's sermon themes, we encouraged them to work hard to earn their donations (and packed lots of ideas for how to earn their money in the sermon journal!) and then sacrifice the money they could have used to pad their allowance by bringing it to give on Commitment Sunday.

Empowering kids is one of our favorite things to do at AsburyKids, but I'll admit even I wasn't sure how much money we'd actually contribute as a ministry. Just a few days in, though, I started to suspect that our kids were going to do something amazing.

I started to get pictures sent to my phone of children doing chores around the house working hard to bake cookies or crafts to sell door-to-door. "Can we do this every week?"

one mom asked me, after sending me photos of her 4-year-old emptying the dishwasher.

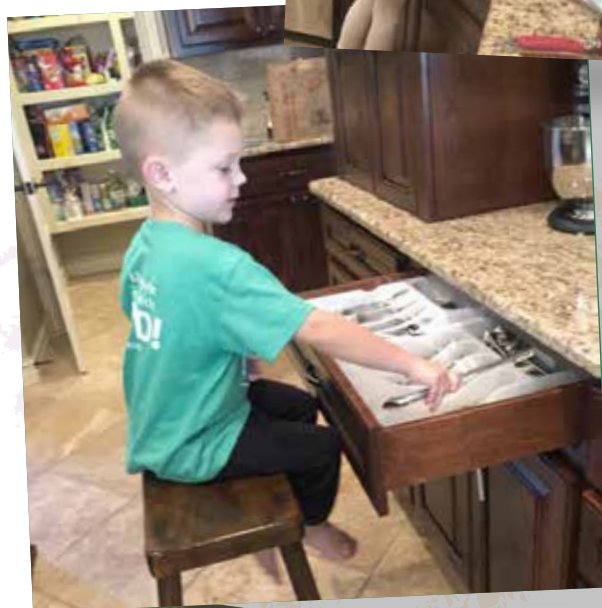
By the end of the week, many parents were advertising their kids' self-proclaimed "sales" on Facebook. You name it, it was on the market: there was everything from lemonade stands to bake sales, Pokémon cards to JoJo Ciwa bows. As amazed as I was by all the kids doing extra chores around their houses to earn a few quarters, I was even more amazed by children who were willing to part with

toys they no longer played with. **This was sacrifice for them. This was giving.**

On Commitment Sunday we set up a 2-gallon mason jar that we filled halfway through the morning. Our sweet kids visited us in droves to pour the contents of their hard-earned, coin-filled water bottles into our giving jar. **From preteens who'd sold baked goods door-to-door, to our tiniest friends who had to be hoisted up by mom or dad to even reach the jar, more than a hundred children answered the call and contributed to the Better Together campaign.**

Maybe \$1,235 seems like a small number when compared to a cool \$12 million, but it's a number we are so proud of. In coins and dollar bills, each earned by a little heart that invested so much time and energy, our kids blew our original estimates out of the water.

They are living proof that no one is too small to hear the urgings of the Holy Spirit in their hearts to give. And you could tell by the looks on their faces as they flipped those bottles upside down in the jar, that the Spirit rejoiced.





“Miss Sarah, I did my church homework!”

By Sarah Johnson

I was thrilled when I heard Pastor Tom's idea to include a whole "kids" section in the Better Together sermon journal. Our team brainstormed for several weeks to come up with fun ways to get Asbury kids and their families involved in the journal in a way that was applicable and relatable to them.

We came up with a host of ideas and finally settled on the four that made it in the journal, beginning with simple sticker charts and leading up to our biggest project; the now infamous popsicle stick churches.

I thought we had done a pretty good job myself, so you can imagine how I had to laugh on the first week of the campaign when a second-grader walked up to me and said, "I've gotta tell you something. Did you know that Miss Mason gave me church homework?"

Yes, you read that right. Church homework.

I replied yes, I did in fact know that Miss Mason had given them an exciting chance to use their family's sermon journal and win a prize the next week. "Won't that be fun?" I said. Little Jacob just stared at me. "That's still homework, Miss Sarah."

Well he was right, I suppose, but I told him to give it a try anyway and he did, every week to be exact. Each Sunday of the campaign I learned to expect Jacob running up to me and saying, "Miss Sarah, I did my church homework!" with the kind of enthusiasm only 7-year-olds can muster. I would congratulate him and hand him his coveted prize for the week, along with a growing number of our other Asbury kids.

As excited as I was to take part in the sermon journal for Better Together, I did worry

that our busy families might see it as yet another thing to add to their hectic schedules.

And yet, each Sunday more and more children participated, bringing back their finished sticker charts, colored renderings of the new Student Center, or water bottles filled with coins to donate to the cause.

Our last challenge was for the children to build a church built of popsicle sticks. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that this most labor-intensive facet of our sermon journal projects was the most widely anticipated! **The first week, we were inundated with creative creations from stained-glass windows made of colored tissue paper, to an original statue of Pastor Tom, fashioned out of cork.**



It was a joy to see children cheerfully participating in our challenges, many of whom faithfully completed each project. Now that it's over, our resource room is less cluttered with prizes, stickers and other remnants of the campaign. The cleanliness is nice, but I have to confess, I do miss seeing Jacob run across the lobby waving his latest completed project. "Miss Sarah, I did my church homework!"

Yes you did, buddy. And we're so proud of you.

Block Party to celebrate the launch of Better Together







A GOOD STORY

by Stephanie Hurd



If you have ever been to Israel with Pastor Tom, you know how he and our Israeli guide, Yoav, use the time on the bus to tell stories. **They give history, context and spiritual meaning to the places we visit.** Those trips also include devotional time, prayer, instructions, jokes and laughter.

The bus rides through Israel served as the inspiration for our Better Together bus tours. **We put Pastor Tom on a coach with a microphone and invited others to come along for the ride.** He started at the beginning, when the church was planted in south Tulsa and nine charter members held services in the foyer of Francis Scott Key Elementary.

The bus then traveled to Asbury's first building on Sheridan, and into the parking lot of the shopping center where we had to expand for classroom space. Pastor Tom pointed to the location (acreage on Shadow Mountain) he hoped we could purchase in 1998 but couldn't.

We traveled along our historic February 28, 2004, walk from 5838 S. Sheridan to 6767 S. Mingo. We heard an encouraging word from Pastor Bill Mason via video, and from our Better Together co-chairs, LeAnne Erwin and Trey Cooper. As Pastor Tom cast his vision, we heard from partners who will occupy our future Community Development Center (in the Venue building) and from students who expressed gratitude and optimism for the future of student ministries. We also saw the site of the proposed expanded portico on the northeast side of our facility.

Some stories were funny and delightful; others were poignant and meaningful (and at least three included something to do with fire). As the bus tours continued through the weekend, people added details that had been forgotten or never shared. Many members learned our history for the first time.

Kylee Broadhurst, who helps lead 11:00 am worship, expressed how much the tour put things into a perspective. She observed, “Asbury is so much bigger than what happens in our 11 o’clock service each week.”

Some members — those who have been with Asbury since the Sheridan days (or before) — were reminded of God’s faithfulness through the years.

Gary VanFossen recounted to Pastor Tom that when he and his wife Dorothy saw the 35-plus acres at the Mingo property, he was certain the Lord had spoken to him.

Among his “show and tell” items, Pastor Tom read a note from Lauren Golliver which he has kept since we relocated in 2004. She was 5 then, and she just recently married. Her mom, Susan, added a note to Lauren’s explaining Lauren raised her \$76 in coins by inviting the guests who came to their home to contribute their spare change to Asbury’s “Building on Faith” capital funds campaign.

We had 368 people join us on the bus tours. Not only were these tours a wonderful experience for those who could participate, but their lead gifts were significant for the Better Together campaign.

Thanks to all who took the ride to hear a small part of Asbury’s good story. Retelling the past is essential, but we are also part of a greater story that is still unfolding. We are glad you are part of it. We have a rich past, a meaningful present, and by God’s grace — an exciting future. All the stories Pastor Tom shared on the bus tours made one thing abundantly clear: we always have been and always will be Better Together.



CARDBOARD



LOOKING AT PICS TO GET MY KICKS

by Jim Asbury



God is all about second chances. He takes our broken parts and uses them to glorify and honor Him, not us. My story is one where I followed the kingdom of self instead of the kingdom of God. My cardboard testimony, "Looking at pics to get my kicks," tells of my struggle and the worldly thoughts I had. It led to a broken marriage and separation from God. It was something I was ashamed to admit.

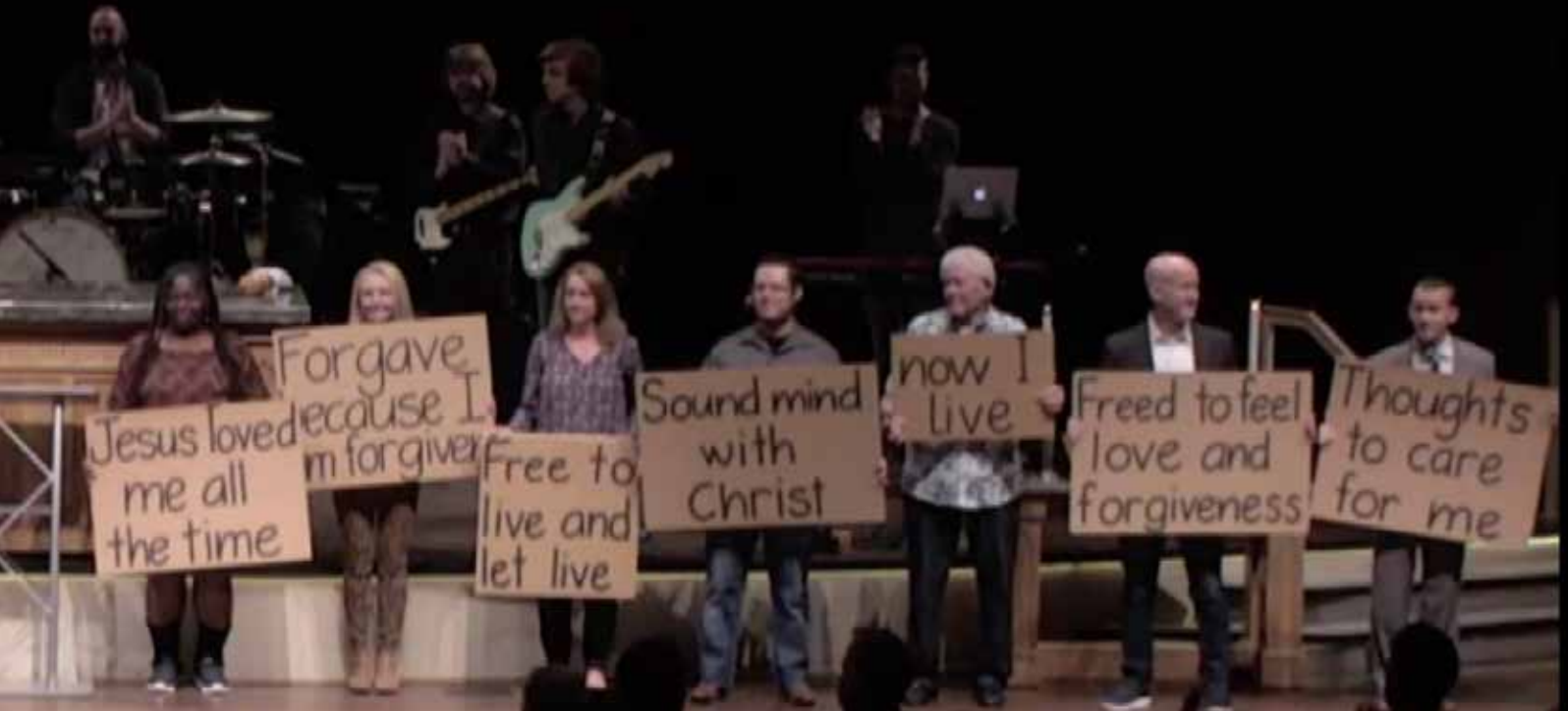
This brokenness led me to Celebrate Recovery 12 years ago. There were people there who showed me what God's love looked like. No judgment, encouragement and guidance on a road to recovery. I went through a 12-step process and learned to work on me and my relationship with God. 1 Samuel 16:7b "For the Lord sees not as man

sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."

Reading His Word is my daily "fix." It became a habit for me because I wanted to learn and apply His Word in my life. It helped me interact with others and share what was in my heart. It doesn't mean that there aren't challenges but it does help me maneuver through life with a better attitude and confidence in knowing He loves me.

A saying used at CR is, "don't quit before the miracle." The miracle isn't my recovery, it is God using me and my brokenness to help others. And that is the best reason for me to stay involved in Celebrate Recovery. Helping others helps me.

TESTIMONIES



KINGDOM OF GOD MARRIAGE

by John and Tracy Leak



Our “Kingdom of God Marriage” came from buying into what Pastor Tom preaches about when talking of the two kingdoms of life. Working each day to live for God and not ourselves has strengthened our marriage and faith. Becoming plugged into Asbury has opened our eyes to the great way to meet great new Christian friends to share victories and defeats in life. We strive every day to help others follow Jesus by living a “Kingdom of God” example of life in the good times and bad. Serving the community through 2nd Saturday has been another great way that we have grown our marriage within Christ and built relationships with like-minded people. We are so thankful and blessed to be a part of Asbury and the “Kingdom of God” and just want others to take part.

CHERISHED AND LOVED

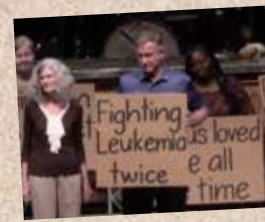
by Haley Kurth



2017 is the year I was adopted. Before I was adopted, my life was very hectic. I was very afraid and all alone. Both of my parents left me behind; they gave up on everything. My mother raised me since the day I was born. She decided men were more important to her. During this time I was not allowed to go to church. This made me feel more alone than anything. The thing that kept me going was school. I was hardly ever home and when I was, I was always home alone. My hope was to go to college. When I was adopted, all of this came true. I got adopted by my aunt and uncle. They have given me more opportunities than anyone. They push me to give my all and to do my best. To this day I have been involved in church, got back into cheerleading, and was accepted into college.

FIGHTING LEUKEMIA TWICE

by Kirk Nellis



In June of 2010, a lifelong buddy of mine and I turned 60. As we were admiring our successful business careers it became apparent that it was not the case for our physical appearance. A pact was made that day to start exercising daily to regain our physical shape.

Fast forward two years and I had lost 25 pounds and my buddy had lost 45. I felt good and was in the best shape I'd been in for many years when I developed a sniffle that just didn't seem to go away. I didn't think too much about it until one day I was so exhausted during our daily exercise I couldn't take another step. My buddy called my wife to come pick me up and take me home. I was feeling a little embarrassed to go to the doctor, but at my wife's insistence I headed to the doctor's office where blood samples were taken along with the normal heart and chest examinations.

The call came about 10 pm that evening. As a side note, you never want your doctor calling you at 10 pm after an office visit. The doctor said he got the blood results back and wanted me sitting down and my wife on the phone call as well. The doctor stated he didn't know how to say this, but the blood results showed that I had leukemia and he was scheduling an appointment for me in the morning with a specialist. My thoughts were going erratic! Is my life insurance up-to-date? Do I have medical coverage for this? How is the business going to continue to operate? I didn't fear death, which is kind of strange, but I felt comforted that I was a believer in Jesus.

I arrived at the specialist's office the next day and was taken aback by how giddy he was about my test results, since they confirmed I was in serious trouble with leukemia. The specialist announced that I was very fortunate that the type of leukemia I had contacted was curable. However, I did need to check into the hospital, like now, and to start treatment immediately. I was in imminent danger of internal bleeding.

Fast forward, after months of chemo treatments and a barrage of drugs, I looked and felt terrible! I had no hair, no memory, no stamina, I had lost count of the number of blood transfusions I was given, and how many times I

was in and out of the hospital. I had a bout with E. coli and a staph infection that about did me in. I was told to wear a mask to keep from getting a normal cold, as my body had become so weak. Any virus could be my last.

At the end of the treatments the specialist declared me free of leukemia. My wife and I immediately planned my bucket list trip to Israel with Pastor Tom. Life continued to be great and I was walking again with my lifelong buddy. I was telling everyone that I had kicked that no-good cancer and by golly I was the toughest guy around.

The boasting lasted about eight months. I was going in for normal checkups and yes, again I get a call from the doctor, and he said, "I don't know how to tell you this, but the leukemia has returned." As a second side note, it doesn't matter what time the doctor calls, if he calls you, it is usually not good news.

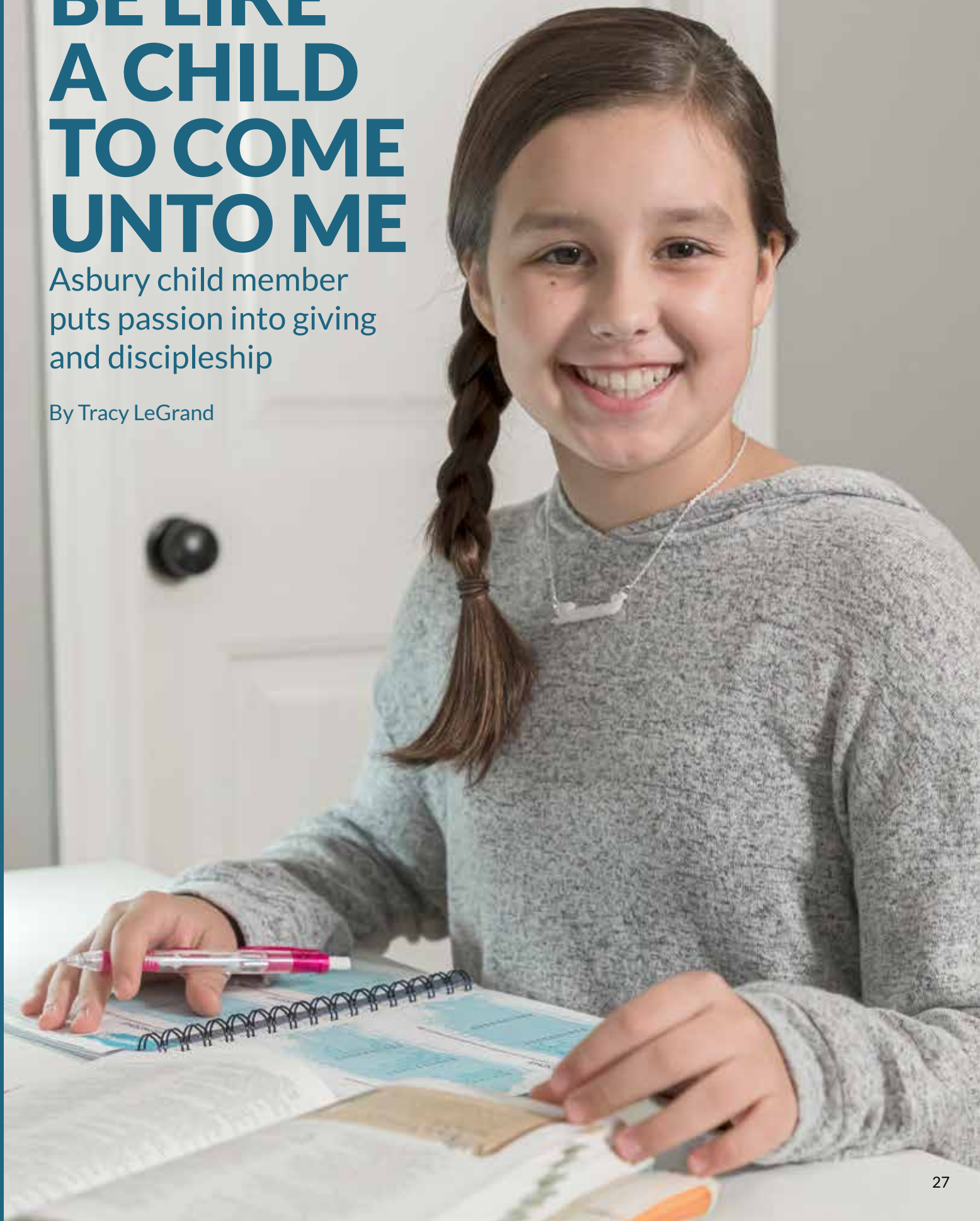
Since the chemo didn't do the job, the doctor wanted to try the newest method of treating (APL) leukemia which is a daily injection directly to the aorta of arsenic (arsenic trioxide to be more precise). I asked the doctor if he was kidding me, arsenic ?? Really! He explained that five days each week I had to sit with a slow drip of arsenic for four hours over the next two months. They would first give me drugs to kill the pain, then give the arsenic, and then give me drugs to make me feel good. I read a lot. I watched other patients, some I prayed over, some I prayed with, and some I laughed with knowing how life throws us curveballs.

The doctor again pronounced me free of leukemia and completely cured. Well sort of, once you are classified as a recurring leukemia patient the promise of total remission disappears. This is where faith really kicks in! Fear can be terrifying, but for me it is the not knowing – the gut feeling that there may be something ready to take you back to the illness. I must give that problem, that fear, that unknowing kind of trouble back to God and have Him handle it. I know I can't. That is why as a believer in Jesus, I can endure and look forward to each new day with joy.

BE LIKE A CHILD TO COME UNTO ME

Asbury child member
puts passion into giving
and discipleship

By Tracy LeGrand



Lennox Williamson, the eldest child of longtime Asbury members Josh and Becky Williamson, doesn't think of herself as extraordinary as she goes about her days, looking out for her siblings and thriving in both her family home and her church home.

As enthusiastic participants in the Think Orange curriculum, Lennox and other children are engaged in their faith walk and parents have assistance in leading their child. At Asbury, families and children are given experiences, resources and coaching to share their faith, serve others and become Kingdom builders. This includes the utilization of journals for thoughts on sermons, for prayers and to list reasons for gratitude.

The sixth-grader doesn't remember when she first heard about the church community campaign to build the student development center.

It could have been during Sunday sermon, on a Wednesday evening or in Sunday school, but before she knew it, Lennox was actively involved in the kid's section of her mother's Better Together sermon/prayer/gratitude journal.

“She used it more than I did,” Becky laughs, showing pages of her journal and the sections where Lennox first worked on the lessons of gratitude. In that lesson, the listing began with Mom, Dad, Kendrix, Roux, Mason and continued with other church family members. Other listings include favorite activities like dancing. Soon Lennox had her own sermon journal, in which she uses the kid's section to practice and deeply examine the Lord's Prayer and other exercises.

“She's filling it up and studying it,” says Becky, and Lennox is generous in sharing her handiwork – a heartfelt and colorful mélange of handwritten testimony and listings of gratitude along with cheerful stickers, artwork both of her own and the coloring in the provided images, chore chart ideas and more. Lennox approached the journal activities with a giving heart, her mother says, and challenged herself by participating in the weekly lessons and spending time contemplating what she learned.

The Williamson children earn points for performing chores with Lennox tracking her progress on a wrist device as she can trade points for privileges, treats and “even cash” for tasks including loading and emptying the dishwasher, cleaning the family bathrooms and vacuuming. With this money – and some innovative ideas –



Lennox acted on a personal drive to give back to her church. She says, “I just felt like I wanted to and could do something to help my church and for the campaign for the Student Center Building and Community Outreach Center,” so she took her goals to her family.

“We discussed it,” Becky says, “And we all agreed it would mean a lot less meals out, fewer trips to the movies, less summer camp and other holiday activities. We discussed what a tithe is, that it is 10 percent and Lennox wanted to do more than that.” The Williamsons – with Lennox poised to add to the family contribution – would make their donation as a family with faith in action.

With an entrepreneurial spirit and armed with a longtime family recipe for easy, comparatively nutritious and especially yummy Monster Cookies made of oatmeal, honey, peanut butter and M & M candies, Lennox went to work. She consulted with her mom on ingredient costs and her business plan included

preparing the no-bake treats, cleanup and filling a basket with those tasty treats.

She included bananas at 50 cents each and, on the computer, created a sign advertising the treats along with the “\$2 Afternoon Special” of a banana and cookie bar.

Classmates and kids waiting at the bus stop were customers.

Lennox’s giving heart and commitment to discipleship is the perfect reminder to give and serve with a “child-like” faith.



YOU CAN'T OUTGIVE GOD

By Sara and Matt Rogers



Sacrificial giving. It sounds, like you have to sacrifice something – to give up something. And the concept of sacrifice or doing without is foreign to most of us, right? **In this selfie-driven, social media culture, life can easily revolve around me, myself and I. But in God's Kingdom, the focus is, "What can I do for you?"**

What does sacrificial giving look like? Maybe it's a student choosing to show up to 2nd Saturday at 8 am and be the hands and feet of Jesus around Tulsa, even though she already has fulfilled her school's required community service hours. Maybe it's a couple serving as foster parents to a child who needs to be shown love, grace and comfort. It could be it's an employee using precious vacation time to witness to others on a mission trip. Maybe it's a person giving away his car to a co-worker needing reliable transportation. Or, even it's you giving \$10, \$100 or \$1,000 per month to Asbury's Better Together capital campaign so we can better fulfill our mission of helping others follow Jesus.

Recently, our AsburyKids Coordinator Sarah Johnson was teaching our Rooted. She reminded us of an amazing scripture from Deuteronomy 6:4-13 that calls for wholehearted commitment. As Moses was leading the Hebrews, the nation of Israel, into a land flowing with milk and honey as well as a land filled with people who believed in many gods, Moses implored the people in verse 4, "Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God, the Lord is one."

Moses reminded the people they were about to enter a land with large, prosperous cities where they would not have to work to build the cities or houses, dig the water wells, grow the food or produce the goods they were about to enjoy. Sound familiar? It can be very easy to

forget the Lord's provision and faithfulness when we have so much available at the snap of our fingers. Rather, we must "worship the Lord our God and serve only Him."

During the Better Together sermon series, Pastor Tom led us through 1 Chronicles 28-29. As King David was preparing his son Solomon for assuming the responsibilities of the throne, David shared instruction and encouragement that we can apply in our lives: learn to know the God of our ancestors intimately by worshiping and serving Him with our whole hearts and willing minds; we are to be strong and courageous, and do the work (of building the Temple) while not being afraid or discouraged because the Lord God is with us; when we as “mighty men and women” are called to give, we can rejoice over the offerings when they are given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord; and we should offer our praises to the Lord.

As we, along with the rest of Asbury’s congregation, were preparing to make our financial gift to the Better Together capital campaign, we were continuously seeking God and asking Him to show us what sacrificial giving meant to us specifically.

Until recently, we didn’t have much committed financially to Asbury. **We were giving of our time and talents by volunteering with various ministries around the church;** however, Better Together was an opportunity for us to open our tight hold (or death grip!) on our finances and think with a sacrificial mind and heart. While sacrificing is inherently challenging and potentially scary if we’re not trusting God, we truly wanted to approach our financial giving freely and wholeheartedly like the Israelites building the Temple of God.

After much prayer and pouring over every aspect of our monthly budget (including our beloved vacation fund), we shot off an email to Pastors Tom and Daniel with our commitment knowing that would lock us in – there was no going back once we had let them know our intentions. For the next few weeks, we had conflicting feelings of both peace in our decision but also lingering doubts as to how it would all work out because this was a major financial sacrifice for us.

During this time, Matt’s grandma “Nanny” passed away. As Matt was helping his mom start the process of closing the estate, she unexpectedly informed him that Nanny had left an inheritance for us in the exact amount we had committed to Better Together. Until that moment in our lives, we truly had never understood God’s provision and faithfulness. However, our default thinking crept in to say, “You have met your campaign obligation, nothing else is required.”

But God had other plans. After seeing His faithfulness displayed to us, the money that we had originally pledged to Better Together – now fulfilled by the inheritance – has instead been used to increase our monthly giving to Asbury’s operating budget. We did not give to get; we gave so God could change our hearts and put our focus squarely back on Him. While we in no way hold ourselves out as the model of sacrificial giving, we are focused on pursuing the Lord our God, the Lord alone. With wholehearted commitment, we are seeking how we can continue to help grow God’s Kingdom and share the love of Jesus with others. As Financial Peace University’s Dave Ramsey teaches, we give to look more like God. Giving changes you. God is the ultimate giver and because we are made in His image, we are designed to be generous. And when we give, we start to look more like Him. Everything we have comes from God (1 Chronicles 29:14) so when He asks us to give, it’s not because He needs our money. His goal is to reshape our hearts.

“God loves a person who gives cheerfully. And God will generously provide all you need.

Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.” (2 Corinthians 9:7-8).

Check out Hebrews 13:16 and Philippians 2:3-5 for more Biblical truth about heart-shaping giving. Seek to know God intimately, worship Him with your whole heart and willing mind, and trust that He will reveal incredible opportunities for you to serve Him. We have a feeling that when you get in the rhythm of giving generously and committing your time freely, it won’t feel at all like a sacrifice.



IT TOOK A WHILE

NEW DIRECTOR OF STUDENT MINISTRY SHARES HIS JOURNEY

BY TRACY LEGRAND

New Director of Student Ministry Chris Roberts never thought about ministry or having a calling – until he was called. **But once upon a time, the 2007 Union High School graduate was a pierced, tattooed, self-described “dropout who took a while” to find the faith in God and in himself to become a Christ-filled person on a path that**

eventually led him to Asbury United Methodist Church.

“I didn’t get saved until my 20s,” says Chris. “Not in high school or right after for a while. I played soccer, went to Rogers State, dropped out. Over time I just realized I needed to find value in myself and value in the world. And I couldn’t find that on my own. Eventually my roommate and I came to the conclusion, ‘hey you might want to try church.’”

Unfamiliar with the experience of church community fellowship, Chris began attending “the South Community Church that started at Cedar Ridge Elementary and moved to South Bixby,” he says. **“That is where I found the love of Christ without stereotyping and judgment. It was a real, sincere ‘glad you’re here, we want to include you’ and it kept me coming back.** I met with the head pastor and became friends with a church elder who guided me to go to Passion Conference in Atlanta, Ga.”

That conference would change his life. Chris says he didn’t “look like a preppie,” but nonetheless was welcomed by both the conservatively dressed and the “tattooed mohawk guy.” Chris began to understand that, “if God can love him and have intimate worship with him, I felt I could too. I was diving into a real relationship with God and relating with students on all levels. And in the middle of all this, I could feel God saying that this is the generation that I was meant to be speaking to, that student ministry was my path and have a heart for them. I feel the most effective there. That conference is where I received my calling to student ministry.”

“Because I didn’t grow up with a lot of money, I understand struggles,” he says. “My parents divorced when I was 1, and my mom remarried a couple of times while Dad was figuring out what a father was supposed to be. I didn’t have a solid or consistent family presence. I was rebellious and did all the bad things and got into trouble. No arrests, but I went down a bad path and made it hectic for my family along with their already chaotic lives.”

Once he was on a Christ-centered path, Chris succeeded as a student at Oral Roberts University, where he met and married his now wife, Hannah. They graduated in 2014 with Chris earning a degree in ministry and leadership and Hannah in Christian care and counseling. Chris took a position as youth pastor for Knollwood Church in Mobile, Ala.

The couple have two children, Adeline, age 4 and baby Eden is a 1-year-old. When he thinks about the parenting issues yet to come, Chris laughs and says, **“‘God has a sense of humor because I’m terrified. But I’ve got plenty of years to figure out ways to torture their boyfriends.’”**

Having met during their journey to living a faith-filled life while at ORU, Chris says his and Hannah’s early deepening of their faith in God, themselves and each other would prove important. “Our biggest test to-date in coming together as a united couple was with the birth of Adeline who has a rare, genetic disorder,” says Chris. “We continue to learn how to rely on each other and look to our marriage for deeper meaning like what does it mean to love your wife as Christ loves the church, to love your husband for better or worse. We struggle with that together and deal with the stress of our daughter possibly dying, relying on each other for daily encouragement. **Sometimes you feel like you have nothing to give and are confused, asking God ‘why.’ We push through that by encouraging each other and seeking God consistently and I think we’re stronger now together.**”

Chris and Hannah are finalizing the purchase of a house in the area, and currently staying with family. He says his parents eventually found “great people to marry” and his siblings are all doing well in life. Coming back to Oklahoma and bringing his family to become part of Asbury United Methodist are a great blessing and Chris says, “People here are just plain great and they’ve welcomed me and reached out to my family and me and it means everything.”

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

- Luke 12:13-21

by Pastor Guy Ames



ASBURY
FOUNDATION

Jesus said more about money and possessions than he did about prayer, faith or salvation. Why? Perhaps we find a clue in his words, "Where your treasure is, there will be your heart also." One man wanted legal help; but Jesus gave him more than insider trading.

Jesus challenged people to examine the selfish values of living... he calls us to look beyond commodities, stocks, bonds, and profits to the real stuff of life.

In this Gospel story, Jesus refuses to be caught up in this family squabble. I didn't know an inheritance could create division within a family. People become greedy, selfish, demanding their "fair share" or more, causing unimaginable grief. The same thing has happened to this young man in this story. Jesus' words to him finally were, "Watch and guard yourself against the spirit which is always wanting more; for if a person has an abundance, real life does not come from possessions."

The real issue was greed. To those who had an abundant supply, Jesus spoke about the farmer he calls the rich fools. Two things stand out about this man: 1) he

never saw beyond himself, opposite of what Jesus taught. Instead of denying himself, he aggressively affirmed himself. Instead of finding happiness in giving, he sought to find it in hoarding and gaining.

Secondly, this man never saw beyond this world. All his plans were made on the basis of this life. I love the old story of a conversation between an ambitious young man and an experienced older man. "I will be educated for my career." "And then?" "I will set up in business." "And then?" "I will make my fortune." "And then?" "I will retire and live on my fortune." "And then?" "I suppose that someday I will die." "And then?"

Jesus pointed to the problem of "abundance" and saw through the shallow security of affluence. The problem is that with affluence comes a false sense of security, whether physical or emotional or spiritual.

The reality is money cannot protect us from the ultimate experiences of life and death.

True riches are based on a real view of life. Life is uncertain and life can be fragile. We live as though the fragile nature of life happens to others, not to us. People who live calamity free begin to be naïve about the realities of life. They begin to take life itself for granted. We stop thanking God for the blessedness of life and we grow accustomed to the gift of living. One survivor of the 9/11 attack, saved from the 80th floor of the World Trade Center said, "I will never take life for granted again."

"Life is a scandalously generous gift from a Good God." What better way to live out this gift than to do what the Creator has called us to do.
"Love the Lord your God..."

Jesus calls us to develop a life "rich toward God". **We are a most privileged people. We are fortunate people.** Jesus understood how enticing good times can become to the human race. The problem is that many of us begin to think that we have brought all the good times on ourselves.

What eternal treasure are you building? What will people say about you at the time of your death? What are you doing to build up a life that is rich toward God? Are you doing those things that strengthen your spiritual life? What are you doing to strengthen the lives of those around you? **Are you spending most of your time looking after your own "barns and crops" rather than finding ways to release those gifts through giving?**

Old John Wesley believed that we should "earn all we can, save all we can, and give all we can." An Oxford student, learned he could live on 28 pounds per year... as his income rose, he still lived on only 28 pounds a year so that he could give away more and more.

Our recent Better Together Campaign has created a wonderful opportunity for Asbury to look not to our future, but the future of younger generations. Generous commitments will enable our foundation to continue providing resources toward keeping those facilities and ministries fresh long into the future. Thank you on behalf of our Asbury Foundation Board for your visionary gifts that will keep on giving year in and year out for the glory of God through Christ.

GOD IS SO GOOD

God is so good.

John has a very, very bad knee and is losing weight so he can have surgery. On July 1, he quit the paper route that he/we had thrown for more than 20 years. When you are used to an income it's hard to give it up. We budgeted and had some money left over at the end of the month with the route; but giving up basically meant being even or in the negative. It was a bit scary.

We knew if we could sell his Honda Element, it could pay off his truck. Because of the Lord's leading, we sold his car within days of listing it to a ministry that buys cars and gives to those who are on rehabbing and getting back on their feet.

What a Godsend that was and to help others as well.

When the Better Together Campaign came along, we weren't sure if we could do much. I suggested an amount and John said we should double that. Aaargh! That was a bit scary for me (the one who takes care of the money). But we committed to that amount. God is in control, isn't He? He has provided that money monthly as of this month. For more than four years, John has donated his time to direct a volunteer choir at his school on Wednesday afternoons. His principal came to him a week

or so ago and said, "John we have some money we can pay you with for your service." IT WILL PAY FOR WHAT WE COMMITTED AND A LITTLE MORE. Praise the Lord!!!!

What is more important during all this is because John quit the paper route, we have had time to read the word together every morning.

It is something I have dreamed of for 35 plus years. I always saw my mom and dad do this together before work, but John's job didn't provide the time. So, immediately, we started a Bible study/devotional on the Bible app and read the sermon journal each day. We haven't missed a day yet..... even on Saturdays when we can sleep in. On Sundays, we again read the scripture and prepare for the Sunday sermon.

This whole thing has helped us grow together and grow stronger in the Lord. Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,
Sandy Combs (John, too)



BEING FAITHFUL IN OUR GIVING

by Pastor Daniel Dennison

During my final year (of 10) as executive director at the OU Wesley Foundation, I led a \$750,000 capital campaign to do significant updates and renovations to our 60-year-old building. This represented about 1.5 times our annual operating budget. It was a big success, but I was so glad when it was over. I was even more excited when we had the opportunity to move to Asbury so that I would never have to worry about fundraising again.

During my first week at Asbury in June 2018, I began hearing rumblings of a new student ministry building, which quickly led to discussions of a community center in Venue 68 once it was vacated by students. By the end of my first month at Asbury, Tom had asked me to help lead the Better Together capital campaign. When it was all said and done, we raised more than 13.2 million dollars...about 1.5 times Asbury's annual operating budget. God has a funny sense of humor. I was thrilled to come to Asbury and leave fundraising and campaigns behind, only to quickly discover we would be raising money at Asbury, with a few more zeros involved.

Luke's Gospel tells us in 16:10, "He who is faithful with little can be trusted with much." It has been life-giving to watch this scriptural principle play out in our family and all across our church. God used a campus minister with no local church experience to help lead a successful \$12,000,000 capital campaign. God used my wife to challenge me when

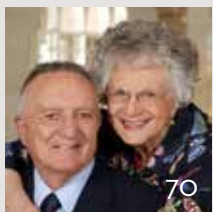
I told her what I thought we should pledge to the campaign. She said, "Is that all? If we're going to tell people to give sacrificially, we better do it, too!" Since increasing our pledge, God has blown us away with several unexpected financial blessings. I watched our three children find ways to make extra money so they could give to Better Together. I'm confident they will be reaping the benefits of their "faithfulness with little" later in life because of the scriptural principles of giving and generosity learned through Better Together. I loved watching Tom passionately lead the charge to build a new student ministry building and his long-awaited "dream facility" to serve our community. God blessed his faithfulness with a much bigger dream of raising significantly more money.

I was blessed to get to know our co-chairs Trey Cooper and LeAnne Erwin through this campaign. Additionally, I had the opportunity to get to know so many of you through the fundraising process.

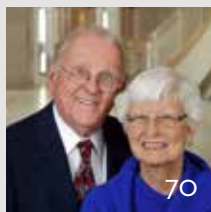
Perhaps the most rewarding part of Better Together has been watching our staff come together as a team. I have watched God work through Better Together to bring tremendous cohesiveness and unity to our staff as well as draw out creativity and new ideas. Our communications department went above and beyond to give us the best materials possible. Our events team created a memorable celebration for Commitment Sunday. Our pastors stepped up to fill the gaps as Tom and I were stretched thin through this campaign. Our finance staff diligently counted pledge cards and fed us statistics to help in fundraising. Our AsburyKids and Student Ministry staff worked hard to get our children and youth involved. Our administrative assistants set up fundraising dinners and lunch appointments. It was truly a team effort and we were indeed Better Together.

Church, thank you for being faithful in your giving to this campaign. I believe Luke's Gospel is true and because of your faithfulness, God will continue to entrust us with more. A gift to Better Together is just the beginning. A new student ministry building and community development center is only the next step. Our children will reap the benefits of our new student building and our community will be a better place because of the development center and the world will see that we are indeed **Better Together!**

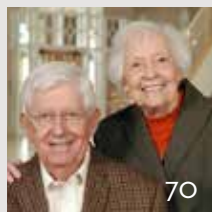
MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES



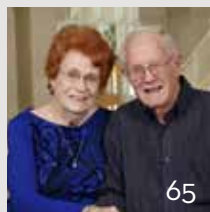
Jim & LaRue
Coover



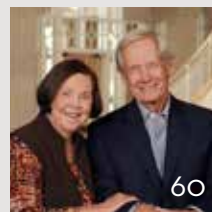
Wally & Barbara
Westervelt



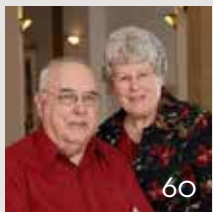
Otis & Nell
Osborn



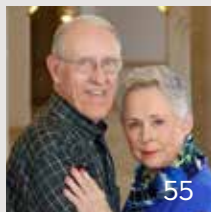
Ron & Sue Shook



Dick & Billie
Corley



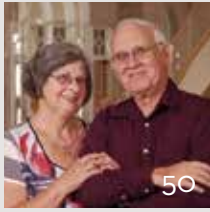
Jim & Susie
Barrett



Don & Judy Stout



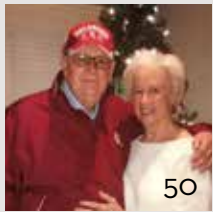
Richard & Patty
Johnson



Forest & Liz
Reece



Bob & Natalie
Willis



George & Mary
Margaret Grisaffe



Don & Nell Drain

70 YEARS

Jim & LaRue Coover	12/10/49
Wally & Barbara Westervelt	12/18/49
Otis & Nell Osborn	11/12/49

65 YEARS

Ron & Sue Shook	11/25/54
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60 YEARS

Dick & Billie Corley	10/16/59
Jim & Susie Barrett	11/21/59

55 YEARS

Don & Judy Stout	11/7/64
Richard & Patty Johnson	12/21/64

50 YEARS

Forest & Liz Reece	10/3/69
Bob & Natalie Willis	11/22/69
George & Mary Margaret Grisaffe	12/28/69
Don & Nell Drain	12/31/69

45 YEARS

Terry & Jann Berg	11/30/74
Sam & Christine Thorpe	12/19/74

40 YEARS

Rod & Linda Sayler	10/6/79
Curtis & Carol Craig	10/6/79

35 YEARS

Dick & Cindy Read	12/15/84
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25 YEARS

Brent & Amy Barnes	12/10/94
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10 YEARS

Daniel & Cindy Fugatt	3/21/09
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5 YEARS

Mark & Teresa Cochran	12/13/14
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NEW MEMBERS



Gabriele
Blankenship



Amy Braden



David & Claudia
Bryant



Christy Crowe



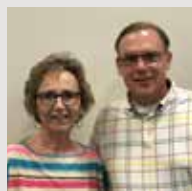
Curtis & Patricia
Crowe



Sharon Day



Rachel Eubanks
with Jaxson



Wayne & Susan
Everett



Sean Gold



Georgia
Hawthorne



Dana & Julie
Hazzard with Liam
& Logan



Betty Johns



Fred Jostes



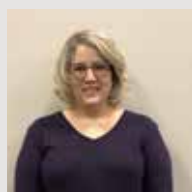
James Joy



Kenny King



Duane & Loleta
Kleppe



Helen Loop



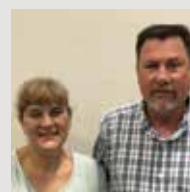
Valda Loop



Carolyn Marsey



Sheryl Martin



Henry & Dana
McClain



Tom and Christy
McKinley



Ramona Mendoza



Hart & Marti
Morris



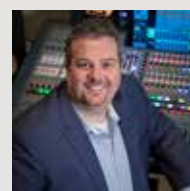
David & Diane
Mueller



Joyce Nelson



Dale Nuaman



Preston Pinkepank



Tracy Turner



Ashley & Stephanie
Watling with Noah



Erin Wilson

NOT PICTURED
Ann Livingston

DEATHS

Ron Hanna

Died 8-11-19
Husband of Margaret (Peggy)
Hanna

Hazel Stacy

Died 8-17-19
Mother of Lou Ann Gruber

Joe Galusha

Died 8-29-19

Betty B. Ford

Died 9-1-19
Mother of Harlan (& Linda) Ford,
John Ford, and Joe (& Marilyn) Ford

Jo VanDeWiele

Died 9-3-19
Mother of Bobby
VanDeWiele

Monroe Reece

Died 9-7-19
Father of Karen Renfro

Elizabeth (Betty) Rardin

Died 9-11-19
Mother of Margaret Rardin

Doris McRight

Died 9-13-19
Mother of Ellen (& David)
Simmons-Wehrenberg

David (Easter) Moore

Died 9-15-19
Husband of Carolyn Moore

Cookie Wilkins

Died 9-25-19
Wife of Maurice Wilkins

Larry Crummett

Died 10-6-19
Husband of Florence Crummett.
Father of Donna (& Earl)
Stutzman

Sharon Masterson

Died 10-10-19
Mother of Greg (& Kerry) Masterson

Twila Keeley

Died 10-11-19
Mother of Denise Lawson

Thomas Diehl

Died 10-19-19

Larry LaRock

Died 11-1-19
Husband of Bobbi LaRock

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