

## A CHILD'S VIEW OF THE LIVING NATIVITY

The Living Nativity has been a ministry of our church for over 50 years. My family moved to Birmingham in 1970 and I can remember participating when I was a child. Back then, the manger was on the driveway coming down from the preschool education porte cochere. Gabriel and the multitude of angels appeared on the roof of the porte cochere. To get to the roof, the angels were told to hold the bottom of their white robe in their mouth and climb an old ladder. Years later, the old ladder was replaced by steps on some scaffolding. You had to watch those angels. If you turned your back, they would start throwing rocks off the roof at the shepherds down below.

When my son was four, someone asked him what he wanted to be in the Living Nativity. He carefully thought for a minute and announced he wanted to be one of the sheep. For the 50th anniversary of the show, we had angels ranging from 2 to 92. What an exciting time to see so many generations coming together, listening to Dr. Nelson's voice telling the story of the birth of Christ.

One of the families living near the church has a special needs child. Last year, this child would go in her backyard and listen to every show. During one show, she tried to make a recording of the program with her cassette recorder. Her dad later came to the house and asked me to make his daughter a copy of the recording so she could listen to the recording year round.

The Living Nativity has ministered to the entire community. For years it has been a tradition for many families. It reminds people of the true meaning of Christmas.

*Ed Wills*



*Ed's parents, Jo and the late Reid Wills, dressed up as wise men, along with an employee from T&N Acres (the company which supplies our animals for Living Nativity) dressed up as a shepherd, and Judy the camel. This picture was taken in 2007, which was the first year we added a camel to our Living Nativity cast. Costs for the expensive camel are paid from gifts made in Reid's memory since his death in 2017. This fund honors Reid's service as camel master.*



DECEMBER 16, 2018

WE'VE A STORY TO TELL  
75th Anniversary Memories of Mountain Brook Baptist Church

## HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

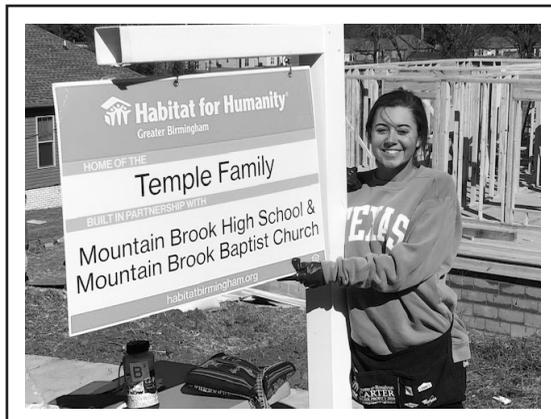
*“Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it” (Psalm 127:1, KJV).*

For more than a quarter of a century, Mountain Brook Baptist Church members have been straining their backs, smashing their fingers, and pulling muscles they didn't know they had. They can blame Denise Basden.

Denise, daughter of missionaries and Mountain Brook Baptist Church members Dellanna and Bill O'Brien, and wife of Paul Basden, minister to students at Samford University and later senior pastor at Brookwood Baptist, inspired our long association with the Greater Birmingham Habitat for Humanity. Beginning in the early 1990s, she organized church members to work on Habitat projects. Habitat's goal is to assist “working poor” families in becoming homeowners. In addition to mandatory classes focused on the financial responsibility of home ownership, families must contribute 300 hours of sweat equity and become obligated to a 20-year interest-free mortgage.

Denise's spark was the inspiration for decades of continuing Mountain Brook Baptist Church and Habitat partnership including:

- An anonymous member in 1993 challenging the church with a pledge to fund construction first of one house and then a second house. The financial commitment was contingent on Sunday School classes agreeing to provide the labor. Scores of class members worked alongside the two families during the two-year challenge completing both homes in the Woodlawn community. In 1994, former President Jimmy Carter and wife Rosalynn were told of that first home built by Mountain Brook Baptist Church and met with the homeowner and a group of Mountain Brook Baptist Church members to bless the construction.
- For many years, the mission committee has provided funds in support of Habitat. A group of members calling themselves the Friday Group regularly worked on projects around the city. Included in the Friday Group were Bill Johnson, Larry Bearden, Milton Berryhill, Henry Bright, Bob Compher, Pat Ferguson, David Jackson, Jack Pfrimmer, and others. Helping with several different teams, Bob Compher has installed tile in over 100 different Habitat for Humanity homes, and continues to add his personal touch to our Mountain Brook Baptist Church projects with his distinctive tile kitchen backsplash.
- In 2001, students at Mountain Brook High School approached Dr. Moebes with a partnership proposal. If the church would fund the construction, the high school would provide the labor in order to become the first public school in the country to both fund and construct a Habitat home. Through 2018, this Mountain Brook High School/Mountain Brook Baptist Church partnership has continued with now having built 18 homes in Rosedale, Woodlawn, Calera, Oak Grove, Clay, Fairfield, Center Point, Helena, and other areas of Jefferson County.



*Stewart Anne Murdock of Mountain Brook High School and Mountain Brook Baptist Church on our church's 2018 Habitat home site.*



*Richard Adams, Denise Basden, Nancy Holt, Rosalynn Carter, Mrs. Stoves (occupant of the newly built house), former President Jimmy Carter, Alice Stewart, and Kate Adams McKnight. All were members of Mountain Brook Baptist Church at the time except for the Carters and Mrs. Stoves.*



*Bill Johnson and Bill Austin, both faithful Habitat builders and also former chairs of the missions committee, serve together on one of our Habitat houses.*

On December 14, 2018, the 18th Mountain Brook Baptist Church/Mountain Brook High School project was dedicated. That home was built in a Habitat-created subdivision at the old Cascade Plunge in East Lake. Older church members may well recall swimming in the spring-fed pool at Cascade Plunge or dancing (yes, some members danced!) at high school lead-outs in Cascade's Cloud Room (their ballroom). As with most of the homes in which Mountain Brook Baptist Church has been involved, this joyful dedication was held around a Christmas tree with a Bible and the house keys being presented to the Temple family.

Along with those strained backs, smashed fingers, and pulled muscles, through both budgeted and designated gifts Mountain Brook Baptist Church has invested over \$600,000 in Habitat for Humanity, a sum which hopefully is insignificant in relation to the opportunities afforded the homeowner families.