

PLANTING SEEDS AT MOUNTAIN BROOK BAPTIST CHURCH

It's hard to believe that Mountain Brook Baptist Church is celebrating its 75th birthday. I have been a part of the church for half of that time based on my age. I can confidently say that this church has been the strongest of pillars in my journey of faith.

Whenever I walk around the church, I could walk into every room and remember something about that particular space. Some of those things that come to mind are the day school, Sunday School, RAs, youth and adult choirs, church basketball, the Christian Life Center, my baptism, worship, and many others. But perhaps the best story to tell is the very first one that I remember from the church at the age of four.

My mom encouraged me to consider singing a solo in a church program. I remember it well because I was not sure what to expect and have always been a little nervous before an audience. But I agreed to do it. So, I went out there and just sang the best I could. And it worked out just fine. Now I know this is a very plain story, but at the age of 41 now, I still remember the lyrics to the song I sang:
"My hands belong to You, Lord...my hands belong to You. I lift them up to You, Lord, and sing 'Alleluia.' I lift them up to You, Lord, and sing 'Alleluia.'"
To me, this simple example and story represent a biblical truth in the midst of a 75-year anniversary. How does a 41-year-old man remember a song from the tender age of four years old?

This solo was the first of many seeds that God planted in my heart through the life and congregation of Mountain Brook Baptist Church. To me, that is what this celebration is about...the celebration of seeds being planted in the lives of many and the fruit that comes as a result. While celebrating the building and the history and the relationships and the people are all important, the real celebration comes in God's work through all of these instruments and vessels.

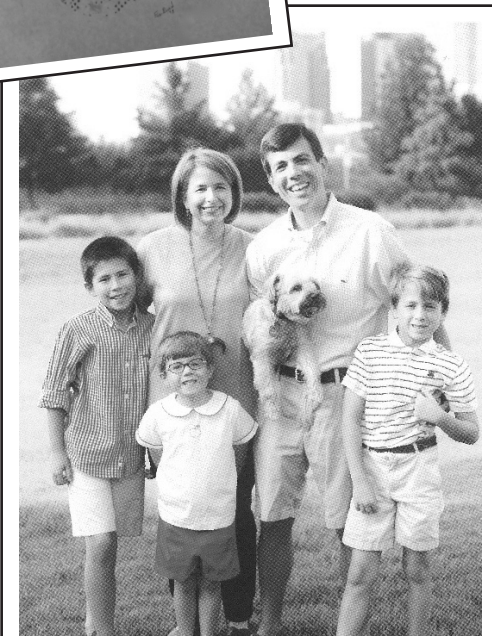
Someone once said, "Anyone can count the seeds in an apple, but only God can count the number of apples in a seed." Let us be assured in our 75-year anniversary that the harvest of Mountain Brook Baptist Church is plentiful because of Christ's work in each of us and those before us. We may not see the fruit today or even next year, but seeds planted before us and now, will be the fruit of Christ that will carry us for another 75 years.

*"Our hands belong to You, Lord. Our hands belong to You.
We lift them up to You, Lord, and sing Alleluia."*

John Scott III

Top: John Scott III, pictured at age four.

Bottom: Hayden and John Scott III with sons John Paul, Henry, and Charlie.



SEPTEMBER 1, 2019

THE STORIES WE HAVE COMPILED IN CELEBRATION OF 75 YEARS OF MINISTRY AT MOUNTAIN BROOK BAPTIST CHURCH CAN ALSO BE VIEWED ONLINE (MBBC.ORG/75).

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

AMY AND RUSS DEAN'S HERITAGE SUNDAY SERMONS

Russ and Amy Dean were members of Mountain Brook Baptist Church from 1996-2000, during which Dr. Russ Dean was associate minister. At present, they serve jointly as senior ministers at Park Road Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, where they have served for 19 years. On June 16, 2019 they were invited to preach jointly on a Heritage Sunday for Mountain Brook Baptist Church's 75th Anniversary.

Excerpts from Russ Dean's Sermon:

I had two influential mentors in this church. Jim Moebes taught me everything I needed to know about pastoral care one afternoon at University Hospital. I was visiting a church member we knew was dying, but when I learned the death was imminent, I called the office. Jim said he would be right there. I was excited to take notes from an expert, to hear what Jim was going to say. I was going to write it down so I could use it in the future. When Jim got there he walked in and embraced the man's wife, and greeted a son, and then he walked to the bedside. Without a word he took that dying man's hand, and he just sat down. The Church could learn a lot from this example. Speak less. Show up more and just be present.

Bill Hull was one of the best teachers I ever had. In my doctoral program at Beeson Divinity School and through his Wednesday night lectures and Sunday morning sermons, I learned about the value of disciplined study. Bill taught me that a congregation can be a classroom, that you are smart enough to hear difficult things, intelligent enough to engage in theological discussion. I'm grateful for all I learned from Jim and Bill in those years.

We served here for four years with you, and you loved and cared for us. You welcomed

Jackson when he was born on Thanksgiving Day that year. Two years later Bennett received the same loving embrace. Miss Janice and Miss Edna in the nursery and all the wonderful teachers in the child development center loved and nurtured our boys, in just the way the Church is supposed to. Soon Amy became the associate pastor at Riverchase Baptist. She would take Bennett on Sunday, and I would bring Jackson to Mountain Brook Baptist....

I guess preaching at its best is really no more than a personal witness of some good news that just has to be shared. So here's my good news: Church works. I need it. We need it. The nation needs it.

Revs. Russ and Amy Jacks Dean



We spent the summer of 2009 on sabbatical. [In travel, we met a Christian couple from England. A decade later I contacted them to ask the following.]

"I need to ask: Is there anything missing from your culture, because the Church is no longer influential?" I braced myself for ambivalence or even a cold rejection. Instead, Kate, a retired school teacher instantly replied, "Yes—family! The Church taught the importance of family. Children learned respect and honor. The family is breaking down in England." And Tony, a barrister, said, "Codes. We have no more codes: Respect and decency, customs and etiquette. The Church taught people how to act, and we no longer have any codes to live by."

They say the Church is always one generation away from extinction. That may be truer today than it has ever been. As Mountain Brook Baptist Church celebrates 75 good years of witness and service to this community, we hope you will spend some time reflecting on what is at the center of this experience of church: the love of God, the way of Jesus, a commitment to community. We hope you will consider what the broader community will be missing if you do not survive for another 75 years. Mountain Brook, Birmingham, the nation needs for you to keep the vision of Church alive.

Excerpts from Amy Dean's Sermon:

... Peter's sermon called the Church together and called the Church to action. And what was the first item on the agenda? Being community for one another. Caring for one another. Taking care of one another. They had things in common. They pooled their resources and distributed everything so that all needs were met. They worshipped together. They ate together. They carried each other's burdens and celebrated each other's joys. The Church created a sense of community.

It's what you've been doing for 75 years now, Mountain Brook Baptist Church! ...you have been a living testimony to the power of his preaching. Offering food when folks grieve and meals when a baby is born; planning parties and retreats; sending cards of care and concern; training up your children and your young people in the way of Jesus and the love of God; offering rides and tending to the sick and the lonely in this church. And because you have been called to take care of each other, you have been able to reach out beyond these doors to extend the power of community with those in your backyard and with those around the world—building churches and responding to natural disasters with amazing generosity.

The Spirit of God came to the Church. And with it came great power. That is the good news for this day. The Spirit of God came to the Church—so that on the days when I don't hear or see the Spirit—you hear it and see it for me and you tell me all about it. You allow me to experience the Spirit of God through your own "enfleshment" of the Spirit in this place....

My hope and my prayer for Mountain Brook Baptist Church for the next 75 years are that the Spirit of Pentecost would never let up on you and in you—that you would experience as a community of faith the power of the Spirit of God in ways that would surprise you and unnerve you—to be bold, to take risks, to change the world.