



EVENTS

Piecing it Together

By Michelle Deuling

Bits and Pieces is where the puzzles came from, but on March 4 the bits and pieces that mattered most were the relationships and the time spent having fun with new and old friends and family. Thirteen four-person teams worked diligently to assemble the 1,000 pieces of their puzzle within the allotted four hours.

Rachel Fekken, Morgan Hare, Landon Mitteer, and Gracie Barrett (pictured below) each received Country Dairy gift cards in recognition for taking first place. Some of the competitors believe that nimble fingers and young eyes contributed to this team completing their puzzle in an impressive one hour and twenty minutes.



Finishing in second place 25 minutes later was a team of Shelby teachers. Laura Sly, Melissa Dyer, Chelsea Hayes, and Amber Tippet (pictured below) were rewarded with Deb's Café gift cards.



Carol Towne, Vickie Roberts, Diane Cole and Penny Burillo (pictured below) took home Hometown Pharmacy gift cards, celebrating their third place victory.



Thank you to all who participated and those who helped make the competition possible!

Good Friday is Still Good!

By Brian & Sue Beckman

The dates are little fuzzy, but the tradition and significance are not to be forgotten.

I (Brian) remember the day when the shops in Shelby all closed from 12pm to 3pm on Good Friday. It was a time the community gathered to remember and give thanks for Christ's death on the Cross. Each year, a different church would hold the service.

On April 7, The Ladder held its second annual Good Friday Service. We were so blessed to gather together and restore this community tradition. But even more important than restoring a tradition, is the opportunity to gather to remember and give thanks for Christ's death on the Cross. Christ's death and resurrection is the source of our salvation, our joy, our purpose. It's what compels us at The Ladder to do what we do.



Pastor Mike Termer, from Newman Christian Community Church, spoke at the service. He reminded us that Christ gave all—His very life—for our salvation. Have we given our all in response? We were then each challenged to give all of our self to Him. Many came to the Cross to surrender a habit, an unconfessed sin, a wandering heart. Five individuals recommitted their life to following Christ. Many others came to express thanks for the gift of forgiveness, salvation, and purpose (pictured above).

- We give thanks for the freedom to worship Christ.
- We give thanks for the forgiveness made possible through the Cross and the salvation we now enjoy.
- We give thanks for our Friday Jammers, who raised their instruments to worship the LORD.
- We give thanks for 67 people from our community joining together to remember and worship.
- We give thanks for being a part of this amazing Shelby community.

Galatians 6:14

May I never boast except in the cross of our LORD Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

LIVE WELL

Pursuing God's best in mind, body & spirit

Avail Much

By Sue Beckman

Several months before the National Day of Prayer (the first Thursday in May), I received an email from Kathy Bransell, Director for the National Day of Prayer, inviting us to rally our community to come together and pray. The email shared that the theme verse for 2023 is found at the end of James 5:16 - "...*The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*"

The verse was familiar to me. At The Ladder we have discussed what fervent prayer is and what it is not. We have pondered the definition of righteousness. But what caught my attention as I read through this verse once again were the last two words: *avails much*. They are two words of promise. God promises that when the righteous pray fervently, their prayers will avail much.

How do we measure *much*?

The Greek word for *much* is *polus*; it is the word used to describe Jesus' glory in Matthew 24:30 and our reward in Heaven in Matthew 5:12. It is often translated *many* or *great*. John writes in his gospel, "There are also *many* (*polus*) other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written." (John 21:25) I think you would agree that *much* is much, much more than you and I might have first thought. *Many/much...is a lot!*

Our humble, fervent prayer releases God's power into our circumstances. Our humble, persistent prayer releases God's goodness and glory into relationships, families, schools, communities, and governments. I thank God that He takes our *little* and makes it *much*. He takes our humble, fervent prayer and impacts not just the course of events, but the course of souls and the Kingdom. What *much* is God about to unveil and avail? Will we persist in praying no matter how hard, no matter how weary?

You may have heard of the recent movement of the Holy Spirit at Asbury College in Wilmore, KY. Thousands of young people gave all of their heart—their very lives—to the LORD. The movement continues. Dr. Vic Reasoner, a pastor, professor, and resident of Wilmore, recently spoke at revival services at Shelby Wesleyan Church. He said that, what many people don't realize, is that people in Wilmore pray. Seven days a week, 24 hours a day, you can find people gathered in their homes, on campus, and in churches—praying! They are convinced of the promise that fervent prayer avails much. They know that every revival, past and present, arises when the people of God are on their knees. That's convicting and challenging.

Do we pray with anticipation that God will avail much?

We are thankful for the 45 men and women who have committed to pray faithfully for The Ladder. We are thankful for the 13 Kids Hope Prayer Partners who have committed to influence the life and heart of a child and their family through prayer. We are thankful for our afternoon Huddle youth who pray, writing prayers for our young-at-heart members. We are thankful for the young-at-heart who, in turn, write a prayer back to the Huddle youth. We are thankful that every Huddle youth is prayed for week after week. We are thankful that The Ladder staff can gather each morning to pray over The Ladder, our community, and our nation. We are learning and growing in our commitment to pray fervently.

Kathy Bransell closed her email with this question: "So, what much-availing, history-making, heart-drawing, stronghold-destroying, soul-saving, state-shifting, country-changing, God-glorifying prayers are you persistently praying?"

An invitation & a promise

I struggle with being persistent, faithful, expectant in my prayer life. It is so encouraging to be part of a TEAM that prays. We invite you to join us in fervent prayer and claim the promise that God will avail much!

If you feel compelled to pray for The Ladder, our kids, and our community, and would like to commit to our prayer TEAM, please contact The Ladder:

Email: info@theladdercommunitycenter.com or Call: (231) 259-0211

"...*'Hope So' to 'Know So'*" Continued from Page 2

The young man thought for a moment and then said, "Guilty." I then lovingly and soberly asked, "Would you go to heaven or hell?" As the revelation of his status sunk in, a waterfall of tears began to flow from his eyes and down his face. After a long pause I said, "That's bad news isn't it? Can I share with you the Good News?" He eagerly said, "Yes!"

I then explained, "God loves you so much that He sent His one and only Son, Jesus, who did what you and I failed to do. He kept the Ten Commandments perfectly, yet was crucified on a cross—not because He did anything wrong. He died to pay the penalty for your wrongdoing and the wrongdoings of the whole world. You did the crime, and He paid the fine to forgive you. Now it's your choice whether or not

you want to receive that gift He paid for. Would you like to receive it?"

"Yes," he replied.

I then invited him to pray and tell God what was on his mind. With tears still on his face, he prayed out loud. "God, I have done wrong. I'm sorry. Thank you, Jesus, for forgiving me. Jesus, I want you to be my boss. Amen."

Needless to say, that was one of the most precious highlights of my time at The Ladder. This young man left our meeting with joy and confidence. He went from "I hope so" to "I know so." He really got it, and to see him grow these past few weeks has been amazing. The Kingdom of God is advancing!