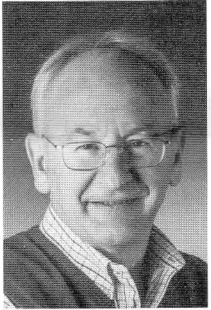


In Life As In Death, The Builders Walk Together

As I watched the Builders Sunday School class dedicate a plaque consecrating the memory of loved ones lost, I couldn't help but notice that it hangs beside a bulletin board filled with photos of grandkids, baptisms and beach trips. In life as in death, the Builders walk together.



Ken Garfield

Since 1964, members of the Builders class have been gathering to study the Bible, engage in outreach, share the weekly Health & Happiness report and kid each other about the Duke-Carolina game the night before. For these 60-somethings, the week wouldn't be complete without this hour together. At a time when Sunday School is generally a tough sell – just making it to worship is hard enough – this devotion to Christ and one another goes straight to the heart. The Builders stand at 128 and counting.

The morning the plaque was unveiled in Room 104, class President Keels Dickson welcomed special guests, including Lisa Peterson and her family. Lisa's dad, Dick Oelhafen, is remembered on the plaque. He passed away in 2015. Past President Fincher Jarrell, who helped spearhead the project, noted the comforting verse of Scripture, John 6:47, above the names: *He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.* When the dedication was done, Bonnie Gunter offered a lesson on life after grief. In the Builders class, she said, "We care for each other. We love each other. It's a beautiful thing." Bonnie lost her husband, Ken, to cancer in 2008. His name is on the plaque.

At the close of class, before heading off to worship or Sunday lunch, class members paused to catch up on each other's news. There were smiles, and laughter. Tom Eubanks and Barbara Cribbs were among those who shared an embrace. Tom lost his wife, Sandra, to cancer in 2013. Barbara lost her husband, David, to cancer in 2014. Their names grace the plaque as well.

In life as in death, the Builders walk together.

Director of Communications Ken Garfield loves telling the stories of the church. Reach him at 704-295-4819 or ken@mpumc.org.

From the top, scenes from a special morning in the Builders Sunday School class: Ralph Dougherty and Brenda Craig admire the memorial plaque. Barbara Cribbs and Tom Eubanks share an embrace.

Sandra Hardy greets a friend. Photos by Bill Walton.

