

SERVING ON A DEEPER LEVEL...by faith

Our family joined HBUMC in the Spring of 2017. We had two young children at the time and were drawn to HBUMC because of the robust children's programming. We were confident our children would thrive and that was most important to us. Little did I know the impact this church would have on me. It was impossible to predict how the kindness of a few members would lead me to a deeper, more meaningful relationship with God and also encourage me to use my time, talents, and gifts to serve others.

It was while we were getting our girls involved in Wednesday night church programming that I was introduced to Casey Parvin. She was instrumental in connecting me within the church and encouraging me to "give by faith." She noticed my family was new to the church and would sit with us on Wednesday nights when we didn't know anyone else. She remembered our names and would give us a welcoming smile any time she saw us around. As fate would have it, that year she was also the co-chair of the UMW's Humble Heart Bazaar. Being a new member, I was yearning to get involved in the life of the church and actively seeking out a place to serve on a deeper level. HBUMC is big and has a lot to offer. I honestly didn't know where to start. I shared this with Casey and she invited me to volunteer with the Bazaar. This opened my eyes and heart to the service this church has to offer.

The time, talent, energy, and resources HBUMC's women pour into Bazaar is incredibly special. I started off small by volunteering just a few hours in the church kitchen and gift wrapping for the vendor marketplace while my kids were at preschool. I was blown away by the energy and community of women I met. The environment was welcoming, conversations were light-hearted, and stories of Bazaar's past were shared. At this point, I realized Bazaar was more than just a fundraiser. It's the very definition of the service and outreach HBUMC has to offer. More recently, I've helped coordinate vendors for the marketplace and this year I've taken on the role of co-chair! With each passing year, I am able to fellowship and make connections with women of all stages and ages of life. What a gift!

The UMW raises tens of thousands of dollars annually to benefit local non-profits. 100% of the funds raised are invested into our local community. Talk about faith in action! I was blown away! During my short time volunteering with Bazaar, I've already had a few full-circle moments- seeing the sweet children of Wee Care engaged in learning, witnessing a token being used at A Place at the Table, and connecting with a Family Promise family. Who knew that giving by faith could be so life-changing?

In the words of one of our long-time vendors, Cleere Cherry Reeves, in her book "focus:" There is a reason we feel this oddly joyful sensation when we give to someone else or when we sacrifice our time without expecting anything in return. It's the exact reason we are here. Foreigners, bringing the Good News to a lost land.....Yearning for heaven, we are meant to invest our time on earth wisely, putting our time, energy, and resources into sharing God's love with others."

If you're looking for a good place to connect with women and get involved in the heart of the church, we welcome you to join us in this long standing tradition of being the hands and feet of Christ. Love is an action, it's not just a word. By contributing your unique talents, gifts, and time you are in turn pouring love and service into our community. I personally invite you to volunteer this November. If you don't know where to start, seek me out and let's get you plugged in!

Betsy Vance

UMW Humble Heart Bazaar
2021 Co-Chair