

Life Group Stories

By Angela Smith



In August 2022, Pastor David preached a message on Matthew 5:13-16 wherein Jesus instructs us to be salt and light in the world so that others may see our good deeds and glorify our Father in Heaven. Subsequently, this passage and sentiment became the fall focus of the Adult Special Education (ASE) Ministry.

For those who have had the privilege of engaging with members of the ASE Life Group (also known as the "Happy Class") on Sunday mornings, you know that they are an energetic, live-out-loud group that joyfully participates in worship and fellowship. Each member of the class takes that innocent joyfulness into their workplaces and communities every week and exemplifies Christ's charge to be salt and light.

Over the past several months, Happy Class volunteers have visited our class members to encourage them, but these visits quickly became an encouragement to us. Each time a visit was made, our class members would exclaim to their coworkers, friends, and case workers, "These are my friends!

My church friends came to visit me!" Those visits provided us with such a sweet opportunity to witness our class members living out Jesus' call to be salt and light in the world.

In fact, the Happy Class is salt and light all over the city. On Green Springs Avenue, Calvin Morris dances with a street-sign at Firehouse Subs while James Sasser collects shopping carts and bags groceries at Publix. In North Birmingham, Jamichael McGhee cleans trays at Niki's West, and west of town, Anthony Derrico washes dishes in the cafeteria at Birmingham-Southern College. In Wildwood, Rene Bainbridge buses tables at Wendy's, while Penny Williams delivers pizzas for Papa John's downtown. And in Crestwood, Mary McPhillips works the front desk at the ARC.

Other class members live out the call to be salt and light by encouraging their friends and neighbors. Michelle Banks and Janie Reeves bake cookies and deliver them to neighbors. Thomas Campbell, Quinton Jones, and Rip Carper cheer on their group home members and caseworkers.

Frank Owens and Curtis Harris sit on their front porches on Valley Avenue and wave to commuters. Kelly Ostrom lives in community at Episcopal Place. Steve Hatcher attends a weekday program at South Highland Presbyterian Church, and Kent Nunn and John David McCrorie lighten our hearts in class each week.

Shortly after Pastor David's message, the Happy Class studied Ephesians 4:1-16. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul reminded us that God blesses each person with specific gifts and abilities, and each person's gift is important to make up the complete body of Christ. Every member of the Happy Class fully embraces their gifts to cheerfully and eagerly be Christ's salt and light in the world so that others may see their good deeds and glorify our Father in Heaven.



Angela Smith grew up at Dawson and works in economic development at the Alabama Department of Commerce. She has served with the Adult Special Education Ministry since 2019.