



# GATEWAY TO GOD'S KINGDOM

By Tom Thompson

Being in Dawson's Sanctuary brings back wonderful memories of key life moments that have occurred here. For me and my wife, Glenda, many of those memories center around our grandson, Andrew. In this Sanctuary, Andrew was dedicated as a baby, made his public profession of faith, was baptized, participated in KidLife, worshipped during DNOW, played the violin in Dawson Music Academy recitals, and sang with the Chapel Choir and Chapel Ensemble. Today, he plays in the orchestra.

Maybe you have memories similar to mine, such as walking the aisle to publicly accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, baby dedications, baptisms, choir concerts, KidLife worship events with balloons in the air, DNOWs with hundreds of students praising God, and Candlelight services. Happy memories like weddings, or maybe more somber ones like memorial services for loved ones who have passed. Those memories may be about yourself, your children, or your grandchildren.

Many of us are thinking a lot about the Sanctuary right now because of the upcoming renovation. I have been very privileged to be involved in renovation planning and primarily with the **Faithful Together** effort. This has given me a glimpse into the work of the Ad Hoc Team that developed

the Sanctuary Renovation project. It is no secret that it has been a long process to finally get to where we are. Hundreds, maybe thousands, of details had to be decided. Everything from crucial design criteria, all the way to the colors that will be used on the displays you will see around the Dawson campus. No detail has been overlooked.

Details are important, but this project is not about details. Throughout this process, we have been reminded about the history of this building and the role it has played in the lives of Dawson families. In his **Faithful Together** kickoff video, Pastor David spoke of the legacy that has gone before us. He reminded us of the thousands who have memories of how their lives were changed in this space. (If you want to watch it again, please visit [dawsonchurch.org/FaithfulTogether](http://dawsonchurch.org/FaithfulTogether).)

Pastor David's words remind us what this project is really all about. It is not just about improving the design with better egress and ingress, having a larger platform, and upgrading the audio and video. All of those things and much more are important improvements that will take place, but ultimately, what happens in this space is what the project is really about. We are renovating not for our comfort and convenience but for all the life-changing events and moments to come because of what will take place with this project.

In his video, Pastor David read a prayer that was in the bulletin on the day the congregation moved into the brand new Sanctuary on March 18, 1951. These words were spoken by Dr. Edgar Arendall to his congregation almost 74 years ago. Read these words again and let's make them our prayer today:

*God make the door of this house we've raised be wide enough to receive all who need human love, fellowship, and the Father's care and narrow enough to shut out envy, pride, and hate. Make its threshold smooth so that it may be no stumbling block to childhood, weakness, or strained feet but rugged and strong enough to turn back the tempter's power. God make the door of this house the Gateway to Thy eternal Kingdom.*

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That is what the project is all about! This building, this Sanctuary, is to be used as a gateway to God's Kingdom! Our prayer is that this Sanctuary will be here for another 74 years so that even more people will come to know Jesus as Lord and grow in relationship with Him. Countless people will come through these doors to enter into new life. They will be baptized or get married in this Sanctuary, dedicate their children, say goodbye to loved ones, be called into full-time service, celebrate KidLife and DNow, and so much more. What could be more exciting for a Christian than to play a part in building God's Kingdom?

On March 16, Commitment Day, let's all be found **Faithful Together** by answering the call given to us and joining those who came before to prepare for those who will come after.



**Tom Thompson** has been a member of Dawson for more than 30 years. He served on staff as Minister of Stewardship during the campaigns for the Arendall Building and the **Go Love Tell** missions initiative. Tom is currently working closely with the Steering Team in planning and implementing the **Faithful Together** campaign.

