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Established 1965

Joyce Ridge (1936-2013)

Executive Director (1984-2003)

Deaconess Lura Turner (1906-
1996)

Founder & Executive Director
(1965-1983)

Proud Member of AAPPD-
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The Best Wise Men Ever – A Lura Turner Homes Christmas Story

Boy, am I stupid.

Last December, Margarita, CrossRoads UMC administrative assistant, asked me if any LTH men would be up to being a “wise man” in the church’s Living Nativity at Central and Northern. I skeptically replied, “I doubt it. But maybe with some gentle arm-twisting...” I was so wrong.

The next day I asked Ray of the Joyce Ridge Civitan House if he’d be one of the Three Kings. “Ooh, sure!” was his instant reply even before I said what would be required of him. After explaining to Ray what he had to do, his response was even more affirmative: “Oooh, sure. I can do that. I can be a wise guy.”

A week later, Margarita called again, “Max, we’re down another wise man. How about Barney?” So I asked the best bus boy in the world if he would join Ray as one of the three kings: “Yep” was Barney’s quick and resolute answer, followed by “What do I have to do?”

Two days before Christmas Eve, Margarita called again. You know where this is going. I said there was a new resident at LTH who I thought could be the third wise man. But I didn’t know how comfortable he’d be in front of people. Sure enough, Dave said “Yes” just like that. So for the first time ever, CrossRoads had three men with special needs all set to adore the Baby Jesus, who happened to be a real infant swaddled by young parents.

On the big night, I positioned Barney, Dave and Ray aside the “Holy Family” plus their pre-teen “shepherd” son. My loud - and what I thought were clear instructions - went like this: “Stand right here and don’t move. Don’t say a word. And whatever you do don’t pet the animals. Just look lovingly at the Baby Jesus.” I repeated “Remember: Don’t move!”

Then I hurried off to the sanctuary to help ready the Christmas Eve service. Suddenly, I heard all kinds of commotion in the parking lot. I ran as fast I could to make sure the wise guys were OK. They were. More than just fine.

All three were waving people over to the Nativity with shouts of “Come see the Baby Jesus!” They were also pointing His direction with their walking sticks: “The Baby Jesus is over there with his family and his pets! You’ve got to go see Him!” So much for not moving. So much for not saying a word.

I stopped dead and speechless in my tracks. For a good 15 minutes, Barney, Dave and Ray were doing exactly what they should have been doing: telling people to “Come see Jesus!” Wisely, they had ignored my strict instructions to be quiet. Then after the Nativity, this spirited holy trio skedaddled to the church’s front door, welcoming one and all to worship the new born king. What a greeting.

A couple of weeks later, all three men asked me if they could be “wise guys” again this December. I said I would ask Margarita: “Are you kidding, Max? Everyone wants them back. They were the best wise men ever!”

So Barney, Dave and Ray are all set to shout the good news of Christmas to anyone who will listen: families strolling on historic Murphy Bridle Path, Central Avenue joggers, bus riders, young and old church members and one extremely humbled non-profit executive director.

Merry Christmas to one and all, while we all pray for peace in 2024.

Blessings to you and yours,

Executive director Max McQueen and LTH’s residents, staff and board



Barney, David & Ray prepare for 2023 Christmas

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