

Advent-ageous Giving



Looking Back, Hoping Forward

At South Street Ministries, we believe in the hope of Advent. In this season of overflow and celebration, giving is more important than receiving. Advent-ageous Giving is all about that sentiment. As we give, we receive a deeper understanding and connection to God and Beloved Community. This first month, read a reflection from ministry couple Joe and Susan Tucker, who are both heavily involved at The Front Porch--Joe as the Executive Director of South Street Ministries, and Susan Tucker, M.D., as the Assistant Medical Director at Faithful Servants Care Center.



Susan: One of the Tucker family traditions is the celebration of Advent, a wreath with five candles and weekly devotions that center us on the coming of Jesus 2,000 years ago and the expectant hope of Christ's return and the fullness of His Kingdom. Two of our six advent seasons together have been spent 'expecting' the arrival of children, something that sharpened our awareness of the season. We have come to appreciate the practice of Advent in that it elongates the Nativity season and challenges something so foreign: slow-down.

Joe: Ministry life is busy, urgent. Perhaps one of the most common trappings of ministry is the tyranny of the urgent -- someone needs housing NOW, a family is in crisis, a staffing issue needs dealt with immediately. It has been a decade long journey for me to learn how to navigate the many immediate needs with the long-term steps necessary for community impact, organizational growth, and Kingdom-work. This learning process was compounded by the addition of family to the mix of ministry life. When I started at South Street Ministries in 2009, I was single -- I had the ability to open up the café at 7 am as well as close down for a group at 10 pm. Nearly 10 years later, my ministry schedule is not as flexible. Now the immediate needs of South Street crash against the daily realities of family life, a life that has immediate needs of its own!

Susan: One of the Unlikely Partners in South Street's work is Faithful Servants Urgent Care Center. We operate clinic nights at The Front Porch every Wednesday. This partnership isn't all that unlikely though, since it is reflective of the Tucker family--Joe at South Street Ministries, and myself at Faithful Servants. One of the new wineskins of ministry for us is the flip-flop of schedules for who is at The Front Porch and who is parenting or transporting the boys!

Joe: On one such flip-flop Tuesday afternoon, I picked up the boys and headed to the Summit Lake Farmer's Market to buy some jam. This was the fifth year of the Summit Lake Farmer's Market. South Street Ministries helped found the market and maintained a staff presence at the market this year leading health lessons for youth. As I arrived, I had a moment of clarity. Despite the busy day, and taciturn tykes, I remembered how far this market had come. It was a divine moment, remembering and experiencing God's Kingdom progress over those five years. In the midst of a hectic summer with many pressing needs and issues, I had the serenity to look back and hope forward.

Susan: As we approach the Advent season, let's look back and hope forward. Amidst the busyness of the season, Advent is an intentional pause -- to light candles, read Scriptures, remember the advent of Christ, and hope forward to His Kingdom come fully.

Joe: I have many days at South Street (and I know Susan does at Faithful Servants) where a feeling of overwhelmedness can dominate our days--where the actions of the day don't seem to outweigh the challenges around us.

However, these feelings are always quelled with perspective -- when we remember how far God has brought us as organizations, as a people, and as individuals. The tyranny of the urgent seems less tyrannical because God IS.

God IS good, always. God IS love, always. God IS provider, always. As we look back and hope forward, Advent reflections have empowered us, in God, to live presently.

Simply,

The Tuckers