



Volunteers Christa Stacy (L) and Sabine Fox (R) sort produce during a Mobile Cafe.

SEPTEMBER 2018

# Manna

# MATTERS

## A WORD FROM VICKI

*You're probably used to hearing from Kenny in our newsletters, but recently we realized that, although many people know us as the founders of Manna, few know our personal story. We decided together that it was time to tell you how God orchestrated our marriage and our ministry.*

One night about 11 years ago, long before Kenny and I were a couple, I had a dream:

I was about to be married. In front of me were several women; they were fussing with my dress and hair—clearly helping me prepare for the ceremony. I'd been at peace with my post-divorce single status, content with God as my Husband, so I felt shocked and unnerved as the dream played out. I could see the shadow of a tall, solidly built man standing to my right. I sensed that he was kind and good, yet something wasn't right. In fact, I felt panicked, so I began to pray. *Lord, if I am to get married again, please let it be him,* I said, gesturing feverishly toward someone standing several yards to my left, whose face I couldn't see. For some reason, even though the man to my right was not a bad person, I was requesting that God pair me instead with the man to my left. *We have the same heart!* I continued. *If You want me to get married again, please let it be him. We both love the poor, and we have the same heart!*

I turned then and looked to my left—and saw Kenny York.

Then I woke up.

*What was **that** all about?* I immediately asked the Lord. I'd known Kenny for a couple of years because we had served side by side during a weekly meal for the poor and homeless at the inner-city ministry in Nashville where he lived as a missionary and where I attended church. Yet I had no romantic feelings toward him whatsoever. What I *did* have was profound respect, and I knew he had a heart of gold; so I quickly rationalized Kenny's cameo appearance in my dream. *Oh, I get it! Kenny represents an aspect of my future husband's character. That man will have a heart like Kenny's: generous, compassionate, and humble. Awesome!*

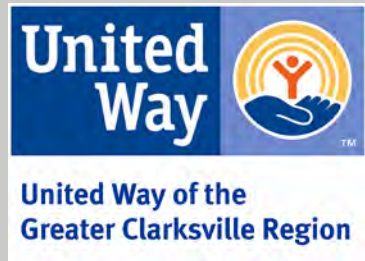


**VOLUNTEERING MADE EASY:** Recently, we partnered with United Way to make our **volunteer sign-up** process even better! Any time you want to get involved with us through volunteerism, just log on to [MannaCafeMinistries.com/volunteer](http://MannaCafeMinistries.com/volunteer); then choose from the categories **Kitchen, Meals, or Warehouse**. You'll be asked to create an account the first time you volunteer, but it takes only a minute. Then you're free to choose which task you'd like to help with as well as the day and time that's best for you. You can even elect to sign up individually or with a whole team.

Through the new system, you'll also be able to track your volunteer hours. That way, for example, if you need 8 hours of community service for Tennessee Promise, you'll have a record of your accumulated time. Check it out today!

**WE DID IT!** We closed on the property for the Manna Village! We even snapped a photo as Kenny signed on the dotted line.

Now the "real" work begins, as the four buildings that make up the complex are renovated one by one, beginning with the community center (which will be called the Refuge Community Center). Our builders (led by TMS Contracting) will create a kitchen, two large meeting rooms, men's and women's bathrooms, and a computer lab. If you'd like to contribute specifically to the Village project, log on to [mannacafeministries.com/donate](http://mannacafeministries.com/donate); then click on the Recurring or Donation button and choose Village Campaign.



## WEEKLY EVENTS

### **Mobile Cafe:**

Tues. from 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. @ Liberty Church (613 E St.)

Wed. from 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. @ Lincoln Homes (Sponsored by Clarksville Grace Church of the Nazarene)

Thurs. from 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. @ Christ the Healer Church (1295 Paradise Hill Rd.)

Sat. from 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. @ both Tuesday and Thursday locations

### **Food Distribution:**

M–W–F from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. @ 1319 East Franklin Street

### *Follow us!*

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Meet the **NEWEST MEMBER** of our Manna Cafe family!



At 7 pounds 14 ounces and 20 ½ inches long, Josiah Xander McGill arrived at 3:26 a.m. on Thursday, August 9 to bookkeeper extraordinaire Elizabeth McGill and husband Scott. "We are blessed beyond measure," Elizabeth says of their first child.



## GETTING THE JOB DONE

While recovering from open heart surgery in 2015, Robert Baskin, now 70, decided he didn't want to "just sit around the house," so he volunteered at Manna Cafe's Crossland Avenue warehouse... and he's been a key volunteer ever since. "I wanted to have something to do," he says, "and when I saw how the operation worked, I was happy to continue helping out."

Before long, he was the man in charge of keeping the warehouse organized, safe, and ready for the many teams of volunteers who help sort thousands of pounds of nonperishable food items each month. Robert works twice a week for three to five hours each day, sometimes longer. "Occasionally, my wife says, 'I thought you were going to be here at 12:30!' because it's 2:00 or 2:30 before I get home," he says, chuckling. "I just want to get certain things done. I get some exercise but I also feel like I'm accomplishing something and taking a load off of someone else. I always try to make sure I'm doing things the way they're supposed to be done so no one has to redo it."

In 1968, Robert became an apprentice mechanic. Decades later, his



career path shifted slightly when he took a job in a parts department before finally retiring in 2011. After more than three years with Manna, he appreciates the opportunities that volunteering offers not only him but others with physical limitations. "I can't stand in one spot very long, so I move a lot in the warehouse," he explains. "I'm back and forth all the time. And I enjoy working with the volunteers who are disabled or challenged in some way. We have one group with four or five people in wheelchairs who make hygiene and snack bags. That's something they can do to help others."



When I ask Kenny to tell me a little about Robert, he immediately responds, "He's *constant*. At the end of the day when he goes home, there's always a lot done. And he brings a calm to the warehouse that we really need."

Administrator Sara agrees: "Robert's not afraid of hard work, and he's so loyal and consistent. One day I noticed he was really quiet, so I asked if he was okay and he said, 'I just got a call that a friend of mine passed away.' I said, 'Oh, Robert! Go home, we'll be fine!' He said, 'No, I'm going to finish my shift first.' He's a volunteer, but he finished his work. I think that's just amazing."



Photo: Flickr

Did you know...

Experts estimate that there are between 1 million and 2.5 million homeless children in this country. What's more, 50 percent of them are younger than five years old.

***Whoever cares for the poor makes a loan to the Eternal;  
such kindness will be repaid in full and with interest.***



Photo: Flickr

Then the Lord spoke one more thing to my heart: *One plus one equals ten. When you remarry, this will be the reason: one plus one equals ten.*

What does **that** mean? I asked.

He answered, *On your own, you have limited effectiveness in My Kingdom. And, by himself, your future husband is only so effective as well. But together, your effectiveness will be multiplied. You, plus him, will make far more impact together than you would have separately. That's the key reason*

*that I have a husband in mind for you. You'll delight in the marriage and in each other because I love you and want you to enjoy being*



*married, but the main reason for your union will be My Kingdom.*

I knew beyond a doubt that the Lord was speaking to me because I could never have conjured up these thoughts on my own. I tucked them away, taking comfort in the fact that God had a specific plan for my life. For the next year or two, I continued to assume that Kenny merely represented an aspect of my future husband.

Finally, however, the two of us realized we were destined to be together. We “dated” by taking meals and other provisions to our homeless friends in Tent City and heading up a meal for the homeless in West Nashville. Our wedding was little more than a “glorified elopement,” as Kenny calls it, but it was a deeply holy experience. We began our life together with not just joy but also “fear and trembling,” knowing that our union was less about us than it was

about God's sovereignty and strategy. We didn't know what He had in store for us, but we were ready and willing.

In His kindness, God gave us a year of ease and fun. Our nine-to-five jobs ensured we were financially comfortable, and although we continued to minister to the homeless, we spent much of our time eating sushi and enjoying our new life together. But soon, it was time for a shift. To make a long story short, we moved to Clarksville, our new mission field. Within a short time, we had both quit our secure jobs (which meant longer hours for far less pay and no more health insurance!).

We also began to see the exponential results that God had promised. Through no merit of our own, we watched Him quickly transform Manna Café from a tiny, two-man operation into a fully staffed ministry that feeds more than 20,000 people each year. In the first five years, we grew by 3,600 percent in terms of how much food we were distributing.



Last month, Kenny and I celebrated our tenth anniversary. During the same week, we closed on the property that will soon become the Manna Village. We knew the timing was more than coincidental (one plus one equals *ten*); it was a reminder that God's plans are perfect.

In summary, God chose two very flawed people, both with a long list of past mistakes, and used them to launch Manna Cafe. Why? Because He's great at making something from nothing... because He is good... and because His plans for His children are far bigger than we are.

#### MISSION STATEMENT:



Manna Cafe Ministries is a 501(c)(3) whose mission is to serve people in need in Clarksville/Montgomery County through a soup kitchen on wheels, food box distribution, and other vital resources. Propelled chiefly by volunteers, Manna Café strives to restore hope, dignity, self-reliance, community, and the love of God through Jesus Christ. **Pg. 4**