



## ***Remembering a Gift of Inspiration***

By: Bruce Pokarney

Tis' the season of giving, and many members of Bethlehem carry a vivid, inspiring Christmas memory of Wayne Bolan sitting down at the piano in the church sanctuary or Fellowship Hall, delighting the audience with his rendition of "Silent Night" sans sheet music. Wayne passed away in 2020, but a gift he left with the church 16 years ago continues to grace the Bethlehem community with light and warmth.

"He was born and raised in this church and was so much a part of Bethlehem," says Nancy Hartung, a friend and nurse to Wayne. "He was a part of our church family and was just such a sweet man."

**Wayne's gift of \$12,500 in honor of his grandmother helped Bethlehem replace windows in the sanctuary with dynamic glass that allows for tinting**—a project deemed necessary since bright sunlight often shone directly into the choir's eyes and the eyes of many participating in worship at church services. This was no ordinary gift from a wealthy member of the congregation. Wayne Bolan required special assistance and benefitted from Aberdeen's Adjustment Training Center (ATC), now known as Aspire. The center aids and trains adults with developmental disabilities. Nancy Hartung remembers working with Wayne at ATC.



"When I first met Wayne, he was living in supervised apartments and learning to live on his own," recalls Nancy. "Staff helps individuals who live in those apartments by teaching them how to clean, how to

cook, how to do laundry on their own—basically how to live independently. Wayne and I always had a special relationship.”

When Nancy’s mother moved out of her own home, the family needed to figure out what to do with her piano. It was eventually donated to the training center, where Wayne was able to sit down and play, much to his and everyone else’s delight.

**Through all the challenges, there was one part of Wayne Bolan that did not need special assistance or training: his heart.** Wayne loved Bethlehem and wanted to make a lasting gesture for the church that had been his family’s house of worship for four generations.

Wayne’s donation was from family money that had been left to him. His act of kindness and generosity did not cause him any undue financial hardship.

For those who remember, Wayne was a very active member of Bethlehem. The church van brought him to Wednesday Supper every week. Afterwards, he faithfully worshiped at the Wednesday service. Many times, Wayne played the piano during both supper and the service.



“I have a lot of friends at church,” Wayne said at the time of his donation.

Nearly 16 years ago to the day, Wayne Bolan stood up before the congregation as Pastor Jeff Whillock announced the donation. He got a standing ovation. In return, the congregation enjoyed hearing Wayne at the piano. There were 600 audience members—a large crowd that also watched and listened to the children’s Christmas program.

Anyone who was there that night will remember the inspiration that flowed from the generosity of a kind and caring man. Those who attend church services in the sanctuary can appreciate that gift every time they gaze out the windows. If they look hard enough, perhaps they may see a reflection of Wayne Bolan.

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*Thank you for being a vital part of Bethlehem and for your support. With your partnership and the power of the Holy Spirit, Bethlehem is touching lives each and every day – connecting us with God, one another, and our mission in the world.*



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