

Stories of Northside: A Blueprint of Faith

INTERVIEWEES: **SCOTT & ELIZABETH EDWARDS**



At Northside “My Hope Is Built” is an all-too-familiar hymn: “On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand; all other ground is sinking sand.” It’s easy to pair this tune with Matthew 7:24–27, a parable through which Jesus compares folks who build their spiritual house on his teachings (the rock) to those who choose to

build elsewhere (the sand): “The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house [on the rock]; yet it did not fall.”

A lesser-known pairing is 1 Peter 2:5–6: “You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood . . . and whoever

believes will not be put to shame.” Both passages illustrate the importance of building our spiritual house on the rock—“the cornerstone” as 1 Peter 2:7 holds—for when the storms of life come, our faith will not be shaken because it was built according to God’s blueprint laid out in Scripture.

Our stories are like spiritual houses, built on the foundation of our choosing according to the blueprint we follow. If we choose to build on the sand of the world, if we follow the blueprint of our peers instead of the one who calls himself “the way, the truth, and the life,” then, when the rains come down and the streams rise, our houses will fall “with a great crash.”

Members Scott and Elizabeth Edwards can attest to heavy rains and rising streams, more so than most their age, but their spiritual house still stands firm because it was built on a foundation of rock.

Scott: “We have very similar blueprints, which is not guaranteed or even common between husband and wife. Elizabeth grew up at Northside, and I grew up at a very similar United Methodist church. We were both very involved through our parents. They’re the ones who brought us to church at an early age.”

Elizabeth: “We were both fortunate enough to develop a strong foundation of faith at such a young age. It allowed us the freedom to learn and grow from our parents’ faith to our

own personal faith. Then as we grew into high school and college students—rather than trying to seek and find knowledge, truth, and identity the first time—we already had that and were able to build upon it. And now, we can expose our children to that same foundation of faith, praying that one day they will choose it for themselves.”

Scott: “We were blessed and lucky enough to have such a strong foundation, because we ran into difficulties early and had floods. A lot of people say, “We’ll get married, have kids, and then we’ll figure out the whole church thing.” If we had said that, it wouldn’t have worked out too well. I’m very thankful we had a firm foundation in place beforehand.”

Elizabeth: “We had been married a year and a half when Scott was diagnosed with a brain tumor. If we had waited for the right time to find the Lord, it would’ve been at a time when we were asking questions, wondering where in the world he was. Instead, we were able to lean on who we knew the Lord to be. We were still asking questions—questions about what life on this side of heaven looks like—but because of our foundation of faith, we already had our eyes fixed on Jesus and were able to walk through that flood keeping our eyes fixed on him.”

Scott: “That was back in 2015. Since coming to Northside, I’ve had another brain surgery and

undergone chemo and radiation. Having the church family surround us in the low moments of life—through public prayer from the pulpit and receiving prayer notes from the Prayer Ministry team—as well as the high moments, having Bill visit us in the hospital when Elle was born and baptizing her, has been incredible.

“Much of our faith in the storms comes from the faith we had before the storm even started. Take prayer. We intentionally started praying together every day when we first got married, which established a blueprint of gathering before the Lord in the lows and highs of life. That doesn’t stop when challenges arise. Just because something stops in the world doesn’t mean anything stops in our faith.”

Elizabeth: “The first time our Small Group met, we couldn’t be there because Scott had brain surgery the day before. Here was a body of believers, a group created by the Lord and established during COVID, who were intimately praying for us, and it was a bunch of people we had never even met before. Then, to log on and have people genuinely ask how we’re doing and say ‘we’ve been praying for you’ is just such a great extension of the mercy, grace, and love of Christ.

“Our daughter, Elle, will start preschool at Northside in the fall. We want her, and now our son,

Paul, to walk the halls of Northside the same way they walk through the halls at home: being known, seen, and loved, knowing the adults around them, adults who model and share the love of Christ with them. We want the church to be an extension of our home and vice versa.”

Scott: “This is our story to share, but it’s the Lord’s story and what he’s given to us. We’re able to point to his power and his goodness under a circumstance that many people would say isn’t good, but that’s because we know that the Lord is good.”

Stanzas 2 and 3 of “My Hope Is Built” reads: “When darkness veils his lovely face, I rest on his unchanging grace. In every high and stormy gale, my anchor holds within the veil . . . When all around my soul gives way, he then is all my hope and stay.” In each stanza, the word “when” shows stark on the line. Darkness **will** veil our sight. There **will** be storms, and what surrounds your soul **will** give way. The Edwards built their stories on the rock, and now their spiritual house stands firm, despite the storms and floods. Where is your hope built, Northside Church? ☪

To find out more about getting involved in a Small Group at Northside, contact Sarah Porterfield at SarahP@NorthsideUMC.org.