

## Building Beloved Community

*Community. A group of people, united to each other.... All I can say is, "Thank God." From the time that we shared that my much-loved husband Tom had been diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease), the people of this First Pres community united themselves to each other and to us.*

*This community coordinated itself into small groupings around specialized tasks – some were concerned with food, others with helpful tasks (shopping, errands), still more with respite care for me / interesting conversation with Tom while I stepped out briefly. You divided and conquered on a 20 month journey of tending, plugging holes, anticipating needs, and showing extreme love, kindness, and friendship in all deeds.*

*I know you have heard from and read the words of many who have been down a similar path, and they all say pretty much the same thing: thank you, the help helped, and we wouldn't have made it without you. The reason it all sounds so familiar – almost cliché -- is because it is true. We could not have done it alone. I would not have lasted as a caregiver. Tom would not have been able to push through as long as he did without you supporting the BOTH of us.*

*If I try to think of a story from the Bible around a similar concept, my mind instantly draws up the paralyzed man on a mat who is brought to Jesus by his friends. They lower him down through the ceiling of a house just to get him closer to Jesus so that he can be healed. That community saw a problem, dreamed up an inventive solution, and carried out their plan. That all feels very familiar, and Thank God.*

Dawn Carsey

