Alabaster Birthday Bash—Year 12

In celebration for Alabaster's 50th Anniversary in 1999, the Brockington Road Church of the Nazarene in Sherwood, Arkansas, started a tradition and has proven that old ideas, if done well, are often worth revisiting. That year, the church held an Alabaster Birthday Bash. It was so successful that the church made it an annual event, becoming a highlight of the church year.

The idea behind the Birthday Bash is that 12 tables are decorated each according to a month of the year (see photos of some of the tables on this page). The people in the church who were born in that month sit together (as much as possible) and enjoy a potluck meal, celebrating their "birthdays" and what Alabaster money does globally. The people at each table pool their Alabaster offerings to provide lively and fun competition. Several people are assigned to hurriedly count each month's offering, giving reports as they complete each month (and sometimes having to add last-minute additions to a month's gifts).

For this year's Birthday Bash, Brockington Road began receiving the offering during the church service for the benefit of those who couldn't stay for the potluck (and possibly to allow an early start to those counting the money). Sturdy gift boxes decorated to coordinate with each month's theme lined the altar. After an explanation of Alabaster by an energetic member of the congregation, the people were invited to come to the front and deposit their Alabaster offering in the appropriate month's box in an old-fashioned "march offering."

The photo at the right shows how much came in that Sunday. (That's right, one offering in one day from a church that averages 195 on Sunday mornings!) However, we later heard from Marilyn Cummings, a member of the NMI Council, "As of yesterday, we have received $5,366.50 in Alabaster Birthday Bash monies. We are delighted to say the least! God is so good! Who would have thought that our twelfth year would be the highest! We have increased each year except one, and it was only about $80 less, I believe. All for the glory of God!"