

## Widow's Mite Well

By Louisa Ishida

In Luke 21, Jesus and his disciples observe a widow giving two small coins to the temple treasury. Jesus praises her for giving all that she has in order to help those who have even less. Inspired by the widow at the temple, Ed and Rennie Scharlau decided to use funds left to them by Rennie's stepmother to sponsor a well-building campaign through Austin-based organization Water to Thrive, of which Ed is on the Board of Directors. They want supporters to use their "small coin" donations to honor the widows in their lives as well as help build accessible wells for those who need them. All contributions to the "Widow's Mite" well-building campaign are being matched dollar to dollar by the funds left by Rennie's stepmother. The Scharlau's hope to raise \$5,000 for the well, with leftover matching dollars will continue to be used for future wells.

While accessibility to clean, safe water has many positive effects on a community, one of the biggest impacts of a well is the freedom it gives to women. Women and girls can spend up to 10 hours a day walking for miles in order to get water that is often contaminated and unsafe for drinking. This leaves them with little to time to go to school or spend time with their families. However, a nearby well can turn their lives around, giving them the opportunity to attend school, get a job, and help their families thrive. This empowerment benefits the entire village, reminiscent to how the widow at the temple gave what little she had to support her community. Ed and Rennie Scharlau recognize the importance of aiding and honoring the women who in turn bolster communities. Using Rennie's stepmother's "mite" is their way of living by the words of Jesus Christ and they invite others to join them by donating to the "Widow's Mite" well at <https://www.watertothrive.org/civicism/pcp/info?reset=1&id=254>.

Water to Thrive is a faith-based nonprofit that funds the building of accessible wells in villages across Ethiopia, Uganda, and Tanzania. Since its founding in 2008, it has built over 750 wells, affecting more than 400,000 people. Wells are sponsored by groups, churches, or individuals, with each campaign raising \$5,000 for a single well. For more information, visit [watertothrive.org](http://watertothrive.org).