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FAYETTE COUNTY

Asbury revival sparks service at Rupp Arena with hopes to inspire 'next generation'

BY TAYLOR SIX

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Attendees of a Christian worship event at Rupp Arena on Feb. 26, 2023, worship behind a wooden cross.
TAYLOR SIX tsix@herald-leader.com



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When Evangelist Pastor Nick Hall attended the [Asbury University Revival](#) in Wilmore, he said what he saw was “life changing,” and it brought him to tears.

He noticed people of all ages, backgrounds and ethnicity coming together in worship and felt that “God was stirring within their hearts.” He also noticed a lot of the individuals at Asbury who helped carry on the two-week [revival at the university](#) [were young people](#) in high school and college — most of whom are members of Gen-Z.

The revival at Asbury University broke out on February 8 when a regular chapel service didn’t stop as scheduled. Thousands of people attended the town of 6,000 residents to be a part of the experience. The [last Asbury service open to the public](#) was held on Wednesday night.

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On Sunday, Hall and hundreds of volunteers took to “Kentucky’s Temple,” Rupp Arena, to have a send off for young people to take what they have learned and continue to share it in their own places of worship, and everyday life.



Students and visitors fill Hughes Auditorium at Asbury University singing with musicians on stage for the sixth consecutive day of a revival, February 14, 2023, which began when students stayed past normal chapel service on February 8 to continue nonstop prayer. The revival has garnered visitors from other parts of the country arriving in cars and busses to pray and sing in the auditorium. Marcus Dorsey mdorsey@herald-leader.com

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Following the close of the Asbury revival, Hall said he felt many attendees were confused on how to move forward after accepting God into their lives. But he could tell the desire to continue the discussion was not over when revivals broke out in other colleges, communities and churches in response.

“These students were on fire from experiencing God,” Hall said in an interview with the Herald-Leader. “Some of them feel they don’t know what to do now, and felt that, ‘if this is revival, what do I do now?’”

He decided to help facilitate an event which would not only continue the revival at a larger scale, but help those who want to continue the movement.

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Hall’s Minnesota-based Evangelistic ministry, Pulse, aims to bring “Jesus to the next generation.” Their group decided on a whim to host the send off and allow all ages to attend. They had less than three days to organize their vision.

“This was next level nuts,” Hall said, laughing. “But we are just going to be in Rupp Arena, with a stage — no lights or flashy things — and pray with people, provide testimony, confession and repentance. We just are going to ask God to move.”

Kayli Hayes, 28, of Georgetown, attended the Sunday event, leading her church’s youth group. She also attended the Asbury Revival.

“I am really grateful they are having this event because so many people want to be reached,” Hayes said. “I am here with my ministry school and youth group of the church that I was saved in. It is amazing to be a part of this coming from the lifestyle and childhood I had — never thinking there is hope. Now seeing this, Jesus is brighter than anything. The next generation is the future and God is opening their eyes and hearts to receive Him. ... He’s coming back.”

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Nick Hall, president of the Minnesota-based Evangelistic ministry Pulse, prays with members of the My Church of Georgetown youth group. Taylor Six tsix@herald-leader.com

She was accompanied by young women who were singing along with the small band on stage, standing behind a sole wooden cross.

Forrest Limon, 23, was one of two Pulse staff members who traveled from Minnesota to help mobilize volunteers for the Asbury revival.

“It was truly unprecedented,” Limon said of the Asbury event. “Nothing like that has happened in my lifetime — something so organic and clearly just the Lord working

in our hearts — so I think unprecedented. ... It is exactly what this generation needs.”

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He said he prayed to be able to book Rupp Arena to help spread God’s vision. He said it was “critical” that people his age hear the message and know how to take it with them wherever they go.

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A group leans on each other during worship at Rupp Arena. Taylor Six tsix@herald-leader.com

“When they encounter the Lord, the next couple of weeks, days, months can be really confusing,” he said. “So we need shepherds and there are a lot of great leaders at Asbury who did a great job at stewarding that moment. This is just an extension of what is happening across the world and a place where people can encounter God and be equipped to take this to their family, their friends, their school, and their workplace.”



Taylor Six is the criminal justice reporter at the Herald-Leader. She was born and raised in Lexington attending Lafayette High School. She graduated from Eastern Kentucky University in 2018 with a degree in journalism. She previously worked as the government reporter for the Richmond Register.

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