

How would you like to
LEAVE A LEGACY
of "changed lives"?

You've spent most of your life working hard, carefully saving and investing your assets.

But have you planned for your assets to keep working after you're gone?

After providing for your family, you can give specific instructions for the disbursement of your estate to a favorite charitable cause — like Union Gospel Mission — and leave a legacy of "changed lives" that will impact your community for years to come.*

For more information, call Peggy Fink in our Development Department (651-228-1800) or simply return this coupon and your gift in the envelope provided.

* (Individuals 70-1/2 or older, interested in the most tax-effective gift, can call us for information on the latest IRA charitable rollover.)

I want to be a part of the Legacy of Hope

- I have already made provisions for Union Gospel Mission in my will.
- I want information on how to include Union Gospel Mission in my will.
- I want to gift Union Gospel Mission through other gift-planning options.

NAME _____

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THE *Heart* OF THE MATTER

A MESSAGE FROM KEN PETERSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



In many ways, the Christmas story is our story



Stop me if you've heard this story before ... Mary is in a hard situation. She is pregnant and not yet married. She is, understandably, fearful. But God reassures her, "Do not be afraid." Though she and Joseph end up homeless and needing to ask others for help, God provides for their every need.

By now, you probably recognize this as the Christmas story from Luke, chapter 2. But in so many ways, I believe it's also the story of how the homeless end up at the Mission.

It reminds us that nothing is impossible with God. Like Mary and Joseph, the people who come here are often at the end of their rope. Some would say they are here by coincidence. I believe it is God, by His Holy Spirit, who directs them here.

Through the care we offer, they learn not to be afraid. And the meals, shelter, and other life-changing programs we offer prove it!

The ancient world probably looked at Joseph and Mary and called them "dead-enders." That's what many call the homeless today: losers at the end of the road. But we don't see the homeless that way. We see them as being at the beginning of one of life's greatest journeys: the road that leads to Jesus Christ, and eternity with Him.

This year, we will once again marvel at the Christmas story. Because it is *our* story. And it reminds us that nothing is impossible with God.

Thank you for joining us in this incredible journey of restoring people: body, soul, and spirit. May your own Christmas be filled with wonder as you share in the joy of being a part of this life-changing work.

Ken Peterson

When Christmas turns "ugly"

(continued from page 1)

recovery classes, he's also learned — with God's help — to view himself differently.

"I'd ask myself, 'Is my life worth more than a \$15 bottle?'" he explained. "Sure, I had low self-esteem, but even I thought I'm worth more than a \$15 bottle."

Today, he says, he's in the process of getting his GED, and one day hopes to go around talking to teens in the streets and people in jail about the dangers associated with alcohol and drugs.

Every time you love, every time you give, it's Christmas!

"I want to help someone before it's too late," he says.

At Christmas time, we see a lot of people like Tim. People who for years have been enslaved by alcohol or drugs. They're desperate to change, but they just need someone to show them the way out.

For more than 100 years, Union Gospel Mission has been showing men and women the way to a new life. God's grace, and your generous gifts, make it possible.

Thank you. Because every time you love, every time you give, it's Christmas!



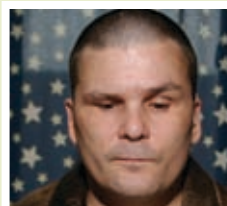
Twin Cities

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS ISSUE

DECEMBER 2008 | Vol. 6 No. 9

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When Christmas turns "ugly"

Booze was spoiling Tim's holidays ... until you gave him an avenue for change



Walking down the street and seeing all the Christmas decorations reminded Tim he was all alone.

Alcohol was ruining Christmas for Tim. So many good memories from growing up — going to Grandma's house, opening presents, big holiday dinners — all thrown away.

Last Christmas, the memories were all ugly:

- Opening presents in the back of his mother's car in the Wal-Mart parking lot because he was no longer welcome at family gatherings;
- Walking down the street, seeing houses all decorated, passing brightly lit windows and seeing people laughing. "It made me want to cry."

"Thanks for the hugs and kisses, but where's the money in the card to buy booze?"

After his mom set him up in a hotel, Tim could only think of one thing: "Thanks for the hugs and kisses, but where's the money in the card so I can go down to the liquor store and buy booze?" Tim knew the alcohol was killing him. Just taking out the garbage,

he says, felt like "I had worked an eight-hour shift." Then someone suggested coming to Union Gospel Mission.

At first, being in a program was tough, Tim admits.

"Plenty of times I felt like walking out," he recalls. "But I knew it was a lot better than being where I was."

Through Bible studies, counseling, and addiction

(continued on back)



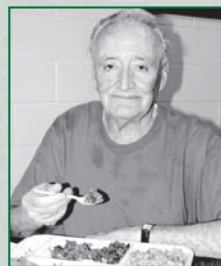
77 Ninth Street East
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101
651-228-1800
Ken Peterson,
Executive Director

For more information, visit us online at: www.ugmtc.org

Christmas Meal Ticket

YES, KEN! I want hungry and homeless men and women in the Twin Cities to have hot meals, safe shelter, and the opportunity to start a new life this Christmas and throughout the year. A decision I make joyfully, I'm enclosing:

- \$25 to help provide meals and other care.
- \$50 to help provide meals and other care.
- \$100 to help provide meals and other care.
- \$_____ to help provide meals and other care for as many poor people as possible.



THANK YOU! Please make your tax-deductible check payable to Union Gospel Mission. Mail it with this meal ticket in the enclosed envelope to 77 Ninth Street East, St. Paul, MN 55101-2288. Questions? Call us at 651-228-1800. www.ugmtc.org



MY E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

Home Office

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Not everyone looks forward to December

When tragedy mars the holidays, Christmas becomes nothing more than a painful memory

For most of us, the holidays are a wonderful time of celebration with close family and friends, lots of good food, and plenty of laughter. But for those who come to the Mission, Christmas is often a reminder of neglect, or even abuse. Here, in their own words, are three real-life stories about how men are dealing with the painful memories from Christmases past ...

No emotions

He had a smile on his face, but no joy in his heart

By Bill

My dad hated the holidays. He didn't like spending money. Mom used to drink a lot. You can imagine what that would cause: lots of verbal and physical abuse at Christmastime.

I was often in charge of hiding my mom's beer and wine bottles, so when Dad came home, he wouldn't find anything. If I failed, I would get beat up by both of them. That's why I drank for 43 years ... to forget. If something came up to bring that memory back up, I would drink. Eventually, it became a lifestyle.

If I didn't have to go through the holidays, I wouldn't.

presents, and I'd put a smile on my face, but it was a relief when it was over.

Today, the holidays are a pretty lonely time. I don't avoid the holidays, but if I didn't have to go through them, I wouldn't.



The holidays were so miserable for Bill that he'd just drink to forget.

No more excuses

MIA dad making up for lost time

By Gerry

I had burned all the bridges with my family when I came to the Mission to get help with my drinking problem.

It was tough to see my kids the first Christmas I was here. They didn't say much. It hurt, but I had to remind myself that this was my own doing, the consequences of my alcoholism. I couldn't blame them for it. I knew it was going to take time before they would trust me again.

The next year was better. We got to spend good quality time together, we opened presents, talked about school. I guess I was trying to make up for lost time. After all, I had missed seven or eight years of their life.

When it was time to go, I felt empty. I cried. But I kept telling myself it's only the beginning.

When I was younger, I used to take the kids to the park, swimming, things a father should do. But when I was drinking, all I wanted was another drink. Now, I listen more. I pay attention. It's amazing how much love I feel for my children.

Somehow, my second oldest daughter has been able to love me through all this. Even though she hasn't said, "I forgive you," I said I was sorry that I hadn't been there and that I hoped she could forgive me.

She said, "I understand, Dad."

If this were the end

of the story for Mike, Bill, and Gerry, Christmas would, indeed, be the saddest time of the year. But your gifts to Union Gospel Mission are helping all three of these men to rewrite their life stories. One day their holidays will be filled with hope again, thanks to God's grace, and your generous gifts. Thank you for giving to help change lives — at Christmastime and all year long.

No more presents

The year Christmas died

By Mike

Growing up, Christmas was all about Santa Claus, gift-giving, and presents under the tree.

When Grandma died, Christmas died with her.

After that, we didn't gather with family for Christmas anymore. It just became a regular day. No presents. No tree. No celebration. It made me sad because I used to really look forward to Christmas.

At school, I used to lie to the other kids. I'd say I was going to Grandma's for Christmas and then, afterwards, I'd say I got a new bike but I'm keeping it in Grandma's garage.

Years later, I spent the holidays getting into trouble. I guess I was upset because I lost

This year, I'll celebrate Christmas for the first time in 30 years. I'm kind of scared ...

I don't belong. I don't know whether I'll have too much fun, or not enough fun. I just don't want to be laughed at.



After 30 years of not celebrating Christmas, Mike admits he's kind of scared by the thought of receiving presents.

the attention I wanted. So I started smoking and drugging and stealing.

This year, I'll celebrate Christmas for the first time in 30 years. I'm kind of scared, like



Gerry's drinking problem kept him away from his kids for years. Now, with encouragement and support from Union Gospel Mission, he is making up for lost time.

What is your Christmas WISH?



"For Christmas, I wish I could get a video game system. I like to play video games — my favorite is 'Underdog.'"

— Justice, age 6

"I would get my baby sister a new pair of shoes and a purple outfit. I like clothes and jewelry — necklaces and bracelets."

— Udaria, age 8



"I wish I would find stable housing and a car. I've finished the program here and I am getting ready to move out and find my own place."

— Charlissa, living at the Naomi Family Residence

"Christmas is every day for me. We celebrate the birth of Christ once a year, but we should really live each day like it's Christmas — celebrate, give, and serve every day."

— Ricardo, Director of Latino Ministries

