

**Union Gospel Mission Programs**

**Men's Campus & Programs**

Bethel Hotel, Central Services, Chapel, Christ Recovery Center, Dental & Medical Clinic, Discipleship Program, Men's LifeNet Learning Center Gateway Program  
435 University Ave. E. St. Paul, MN 55130 651-292-1721

**Women & Family Programs**

Naomi Family Residence  
77 9th St. E., St. Paul, MN 55101 651-222-7962

Ober Community Center  
375 St. Anthony Ave. St. Paul, MN 55103 651-209-6512 ext.101

Child Care Center  
109 9th St. E., St. Paul, MN 55101 651-224-9970

Women's LifeNet Learning Center  
109 9th St. E., St. Paul, MN 55101 651-225-8019

WorkNet & SuccessNet  
109 9th St. E., St. Paul, MN 55101 651-222-2471 (WorkNet) 651-209-6244 (SuccessNet)

Promise Program  
375 St. Anthony Ave. St. Paul, MN 55103 651-224-3024

Asian Ministries  
1031 Payne Ave., St. Paul, MN 55101 651-774-5567

Snail Lake Camp & Ministry Center  
580 W. Hwy 96 Shoreview, MN 55126 651-484-2023

Children's Gospel Mission  
77 9th St. E. - 7th Floor St. Paul, MN 55101 Attn: Roger Quant

**General Offices**  
77 9th St. E., St. Paul, MN 55101 651-228-1800 www.ugmtc.org

# Winter bites back

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he walked around to stay warm. By the time a friend found him, his toes were numb.

Fortunately, he didn't get frostbite.

That December, Greg had hip-replacement surgery. But after seven days in the

hospital, he was released — right back onto the streets.

"Why did I even bother having surgery if this is going to be the way my life is?" he wondered. But instead of letting depression get to him, he dialed 211 — First Call for Help — and was referred to the Union Gospel Mission.

"I thought the Mission

was just a soup kitchen," he recalls. Six months after first coming here, he joined our Discipleship Program because "I saw a whole bunch of guys who were happy — and I wasn't!" he says.

Today his life couldn't be better.

"It feels good to be responsible again," he says.

## An Open Letter to Friends of Union Gospel Mission

*"... what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."*

— Micah 6:8



If there ever was a place that could humble a man, this is it.

I've been an executive with large companies. And been active in church leadership. But nothing has been more rewarding than these last 12 years here at the Mission.

I have seen miracles every day. When people learn of our Lord's grace and forgiveness. When they find answers to their addictions. When they learn to be better parents ... or manage their anger ... or budget their money. How exciting to watch someone take those first steps to a brand-new life!

As executive director, I have signed thousands of letters. To donors. To volunteers. To friends of the Mission. And every time I put pen to paper, I feel honored that so many people have given their time — and their money — to help people in need. Truly, it has been a privilege.

I am pleased that my successor, Ken Peterson, has a real Mission heart. I suspect that he, too, will be humbled by this place. Every time he sees a man become sober ... or a young mother move into a stable home ... or someone find God and become active in church, I'll bet his heart will leap for joy. Just like mine has.

As I begin my retirement after a dozen remarkable years here, I simply want to say, "Thank you." To God. To George Verley, my predecessor. To our board of directors, our staff, and all our supporters. Especially you!

Your kindness has changed my life — and the lives of thousands of people in need. I will never forget it.

Your humble servant,

Ken Cooper

OUR MISSION IS CHANGING LIVES



# Twin Cities

WINTER 2007

January 2007 Vol. 5 No. 1

M E S S E N G E R

## Winter bites back

Cold is bad, but wet is worse, says veteran of streets

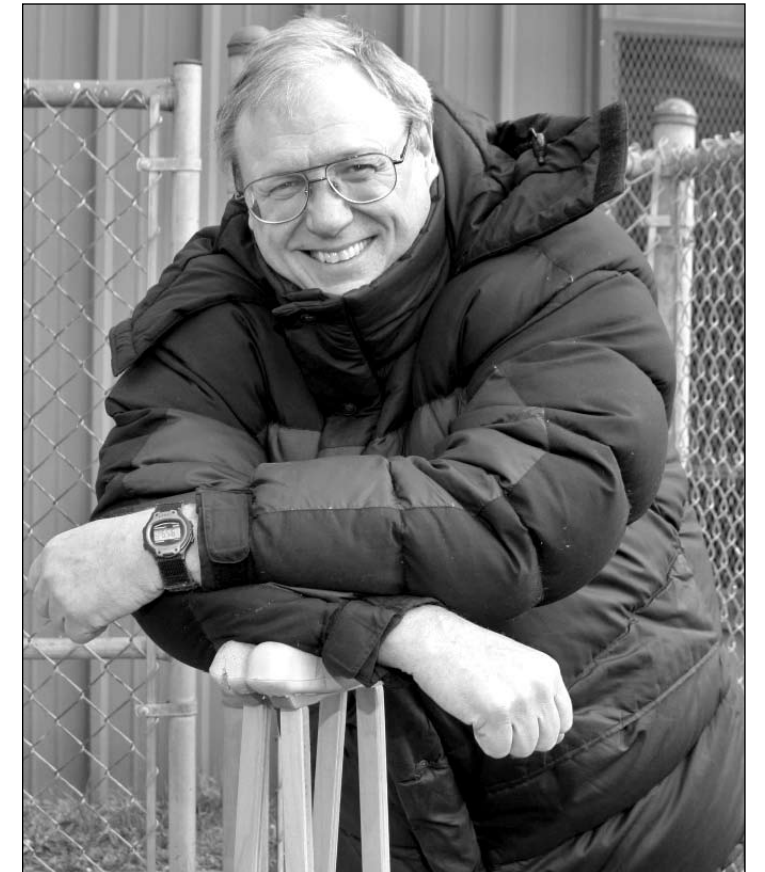
Winter is a miserable time to be homeless in Minnesota.

And it's not just the cold. "The cold is constant. I can deal with that," says Greg, who spent three years on the streets. "It's when

*"I saw a whole bunch of guys who were happy — and I wasn't!"*

you get wet that you feel miserable because you can't dry out."

Greg still remembers the winter of 2005. He was living along the Mississippi River, and the spillway was frozen over, that's how cold it was. Wearing two winter coats, two pairs of jeans, thermal underwear, and a pair of running shoes worked as long as things stayed dry.



Greg no longer needs crutches to walk; now he's leaning on Jesus.

Then one night he went to sleep, and woke up to heavy rain and sleet. He tried to make it to a covered picnic area nearby, but by

the time he climbed up the riverbank, he was soaked. For the next several hours,

(continued on back)

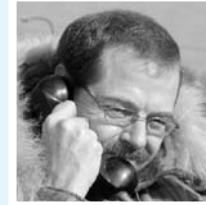
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2 Sleeping in bathroom better than freezing



3 The power of love



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.

**At 10°, frostbite can occur in less than 1 minute**  
Keep someone from dying on the streets

# THE *Heart* OF THE MATTER

A MESSAGE FROM KEN PETERSON,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## New exec hits ground running

This month, Ken Peterson takes over as Executive Director of the Union Gospel Mission, succeeding Ken Cooper. The two share more than just first names. Both have a passion for helping people in need. And both believe that when someone turns their life over to Christ, nothing is impossible. Back in the '60s — the "hippie" generation — Peterson was heavily involved with drugs and alcohol. Now that God has delivered him from the bondage of addiction, he wants to help others find that same freedom. What better time than Winter 2007, absolutely the worst time to be homeless in the Twin Cities ...

I've lived in Minnesota all my life, so I know how cold it can get here in the winter. Maybe not six consecutive weeks of sub-zero temperatures, as some people claim. But much too cold to survive outdoors — especially if all you have to protect you is an old, worn jacket and some holey socks!

This winter, I want the Mission to welcome people from all walks of life. I want to offer them the loving hand of God, showing them that their life can change for the better. And in everything we do, I want to reflect Christ's love for them — whether we're offering them a warm welcome, a hot meal, or a chance to enter one of our programs — safe from the bitter cold outside.

When I was at the point of despair, I turned to Jesus and He changed my life. That's what I want for the homeless in the Twin Cities this winter. But I can't do it alone.

Won't you join me? I'm committed to helping the homeless find hope and new life through Christ. If you are, too, let me hear from you. You can write me at the Mission, or send an e-mail to [kpeterson@ugmtc.org](mailto:kpeterson@ugmtc.org).

Thank you. May your own family experience God's richest blessing, just as you have been a blessing to ours!

*Ken Peterson*

# Homeless skating on thin ice

Little margin for error when temperatures plummet and there's nowhere to hole up

**B**rrrrrr! Temperatures are dropping. There aren't enough shelter beds in town for the homeless, so many nights are spent outside in the rain and snow. A hot meal, which could keep them warm, is hard to find. This winter, if you could look behind the cardboard signs and the blank stares, here's what you'd find ...

## Nodding off in the bathroom better than freezing in the snow

Ottie was tired. Not knowing his way around town, he lay down next to a dumpster behind K-Mart and fell asleep.

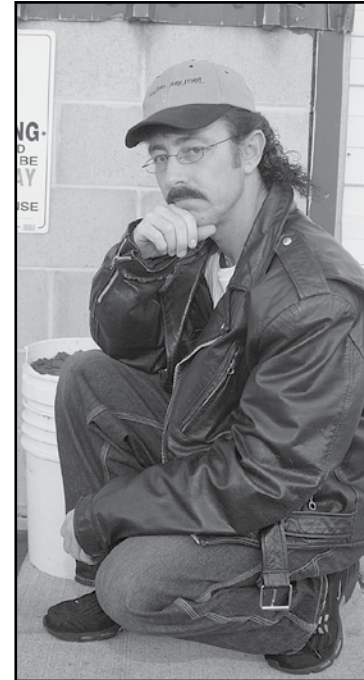
Two hours later, he woke up covered in snow.

"I knew I had to find somewhere warm," he remembers. All he had on was a sweater and a cheap pair of jeans, no match for the 20-degree temperatures outside.

Acting quickly, Ottie walked to the front of the building and spotted an all-night grocery store.

He walked inside, headed straight for the bathroom, then spent the next three hours warming up — and nodding off. Then store security discovered his hiding spot

*"I knew I had to find somewhere warm."*



Ottie knows cold. One night he fell asleep behind a K-mart and woke up covered in snow!

and kicked him out.

"The Lord must have comforted me because normally I would have been really scared," Ottie says.

## The power of love

For months, Tom lived in the woods down by the old power plant. Nothing could get him to seek shelter. Not extreme loneliness. Or even another bitter Minnesota winter.

But his mother did. "She told me she didn't want me to freeze to death," Tom remembers. "She was crying, saying she didn't want to lose another one of her 'babies.'"

Twenty-two years earlier, Tom's sister died of cancer. Now, his mother was worried that death was awaiting her son.

Tom knew living in the woods could lead to a premature death. "But I had nowhere else to go," he remembers thinking. So his life became an



It was a phone call from his mother that got Tom off the street — and into the Mission

empty routine of spending nights bundled up in two sleeping bags — and days rummaging around for sandwiches in the dumpsters behind Super America gas stations.

When Tom joined our Christ Recovery Center, his life changed dramatically. Now he's surrounded by people

who care about him, has stopped using drugs, and talks to his mom almost every day.

*"She didn't want to lose another one of her 'babies.'"*

"I want to get a job, become a respectable citizen, and stop being a burden on taxpayers," he says. "Now I'm not running away from my problems anymore. I'm really proud of that."

## Top 10 ...

# Facts about Minnesota's seasonal deep freeze

- 1 The best way to help homeless people in Minneapolis and St. Paul survive the winter of 2007? Give to the Union Gospel Mission.
- 2 People stay warmer on a full stomach. That's one reason we put so much emphasis on feeding the homeless each winter.
- 3 Blankets are one of the most donated — and most needed — items the Mission receives each winter.
- 4 32% of homeless people cannot find shelter and sleep outside, even in winter.
- 5 More than 10,000 homeless children face each winter in the Twin Cities without warm, safe shelter.
- 6 The average winter temperature here is rarely above freezing (between 2 degrees and 37 degrees).
- 7 Snowfall totals run about 45" each winter — almost four feet!
- 8 It doesn't have to be bitterly cold to be dangerous. Hypothermia can occur with prolonged exposure to temperatures as high as 65 degrees.
- 9 The elderly should be especially careful. Men over 40 are the most likely to experience injuries due to snow and ice, and 50% of frostbite/hypothermia-related injuries happen to people over 60.
- 10 Winter temperatures often dip below freezing, but even 35 degrees and raining can be dangerous.

