

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
435 University Ave. E.
St. Paul, MN 55101
651-292-1721

Women & Family Programs

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

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

Women's & Men's WorkNet
109 9th St. E., St. Paul, MN 55101
651-222-2471

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

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

Children's Gospel Mission
1407 Washington Ave. South
Minneapolis, MN 55454

General Offices

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

Rebirth. Renewal. Hope. It can all start with a hot meal served by caring hands. Please feed homeless people this Easter!

The Heart of the Matter

Easter dinner — and hope — to all who need it

What's the value of a life that's been transformed? How much should hope cost? Does love ever come with a price tag?

The things that matter most in life can't be bought. But sometimes they need to be packaged. At the Union Gospel Mission, they often come wrapped in a hot plate of food, a genuine smile, a listening ear.

Sometimes faith, hope, and love can all be contained in a \$1.83 plate of hot food. That's the cost of one of our Easter dinners. It may not be much to you or me. But to someone who has been abandoned, has lost hope, has been disowned by his or her family — that plate of food can mean the world. It means someone cares for them. It means God loves them.

We plan on serving 19,546 meals during this Easter season. And every one of them can be the first step to new life. A new life free from drugs and alcohol. A new life restored to one's family. A new life filled with hope.

Please help us serve food — wrapped in compassion — this Easter season. Thank you.



\$100 means lots of ham for hungry, homeless people.



\$35 delivers sweet potatoes and mashed potatoes.



\$75 serves up lots of vegetables on many plates.



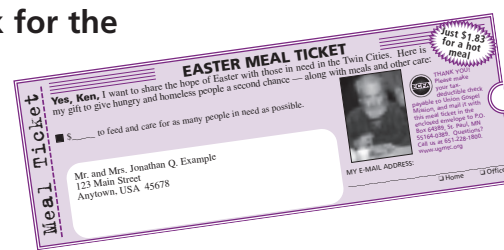
\$50 puts hundreds of rolls and dozens of loaves of bread on the table.



\$20 pours milk, coffee, or juice into empty cups.

Sending a gift is easy!

1. Select the amount of meals and care you want to provide.
2. Write your own personal check for the amount on the ticket.
3. Enclose your check with the meal ticket in the reply envelope and send it to us today!



OUR MISSION IS CHANGING LIVES

EASTER 2005



Twin Cities

March 2005 Vol. 3 No. 1

M E S S E N G E R

A long time ago, a thief hung on a cross next to Jesus and asked for forgiveness. He had nothing to offer except a repentant heart. But that was enough. That day, a remorseful criminal and a blameless Messiah walked through heaven's gate — a powerful reminder this Easter that God is a God of second chances.

INSIDE



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2 How God redeemed a life gone haywire



3 Because you gave ...



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

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

Point of no return

Ex-felon determined to remain free after four times in jail

Last December, another criminal asked God for a second chance. Ronald had been in and out of jail four times in the last 10 years. The charges: forgery, robbery, and theft — all because of the stranglehold that crack cocaine had on his life.

The last time, he was free for only 36 hours before he started using crack again — and was promptly carted back to prison.

"I knew I could return if I used again, but the thrill of my addiction took precedence," Ronald said. "I never had a stable environment after I got out of prison."

But this time, things are different. Ronald is the first candidate in the Mission's new Gateway program — providing a second chance



If a snowstorm is the toughest thing Ronald encounters at the Mission, then he should have no problem finishing the Gateway program. Especially with former Richfield police officer Larry Lotzer (holding coffee mug) helping him.

for recently released prisoners. The program is led by Larry Lotzer, a 29-

"With a lot of hard work, I know I can beat this addiction."

year veteran of the Richfield police force.

"I have always been able to manipulate the system, to get my parole to work on my behalf," Ronald said. But with Gateway, he doesn't have to.

The Mission gave Ronald his own room, a

clean set of clothes, and, perhaps most important, a mentor who has come alongside Ronald to help him ease back into society. In return, Ronald is depending on God to help him maintain his sobriety.

"God says if we take one step toward Him, He takes two steps toward us," Ronald says. "With a lot of hard work, I know I can beat this addiction."

Does Ronald ever worry about failure — especially being the first person to go through the

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THE *Heart* OF THE MATTER

A MESSAGE FROM KEN COOPER,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**This “death”
always brings
new life**

I’m never surprised when I attend one of our graduations and I hear someone say, “If I hadn’t come here, I’d be dead!”

Truth is, they were going to die one way or the other anyway. At least this way, they get to choose.

If they had stayed in their addiction, chances are they would have died from a drug overdose, a dirty needle, or perhaps a random act of street violence.

But when they come to the Union Gospel Mission and choose to “die” to self (i.e., surrender their life to Christ), they have a chance for new life.

Whenever I reflect on Easter, I think about Ed, a young man who came to us with fetal alcohol syndrome — his mother drank heavily when she was pregnant with him.

Because of this terrible condition, Ed had difficulty learning. Our LifeNet and WorkNet

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At least this way, they get to choose.

programs were a real challenge for him. But he worked hard and persevered.

On graduation day, he stood up in front of a crowd and said, “Now I have found joy.” What he was saying was something had radically

changed. And now he was taking advantage of the second chance he had been given.

That’s what God’s love is all about. And what the Union Gospel Mission is all about. Second chances.

Because of your kindness, hurting people like Ed are getting another opportunity to make a fresh start. They were once “dead” and have been brought back to life by God’s mercy — and your generosity.

If Ed met you today, I’m sure he’d tell you how grateful he is for all your support.

Thank you for making a life-changing difference. This Easter, many are being given new hope because of your kindness.

True Life Stories

How God redeemed a life gone haywire

EDITOR’S NOTE: Now that he’s been sober nine months, Greg says he refuses to dwell on the past. Yet he can still recall in vivid detail years of drinking moonshine, stealing cows — and a young wife who was murdered in a territorial drug war. Here, in Greg’s own words, is the long road that led him to the Mission. And why he’s excited by his future — in spite of his sometimes shameful past.



Greg is sharing more and more happy moments with his sister now that he’s come to the Christ Recovery Center.

I started drinking at 14, when I discovered people putting quarters in a pop machine and getting out beer. I told the neighbor kids and that became our ritual until I was 16, when I began using harder stuff.

By then, I was breaking into businesses stealing

money for drugs. Of course, I went to jail. When I got out, my mom put me on a bus to Georgia, and I ended up in the middle of nowhere. We’d run cows home at night, then a week later grind them into hamburger

and sell them for \$1 a pound. We stole chickens, pigs, and miles of fencing. The guy up the road would buy anything.

When I got married the first time at 18, I was shooting up a lot of cocaine, smoking pot, and

drinking whiskey. We were only together 18 months when she was murdered because we were selling drugs in someone else’s territory.

I eventually moved to Colorado, where I married a stripper and continued to do drugs. One day my wife found needles in the house. It wasn’t long before I found a picture of my daughter on the refrigerator with a note that said, “Take a good look at this because you’ll never see her again!”

One night, I smoked crank, did a bunch of downers, went into the garage, ran a hose from the tailpipe into the car, and waited to die.

The next morning, I woke up with my roommate screaming, “If you’re gonna kill yourself, don’t do it in my place!”

My sister was scared and eventually drove me to the Mission — where they told

me I’d have to stay for 90 to 180 days.

“What am I gonna have if I stay here?” I remember asking Larry Bonniwell, the director of the Christ Recovery Center. “What are you gonna have if you don’t?” he shot back.

The Mission gave me the opportunity to take a good look at myself. It taught me that Jesus loves me and I now have God in my heart. Sometimes, I feel so unworthy. My sister comes by every Wednesday and brings me a big hug and kiss.

Without her, Jesus, and the Christ Recovery Center, I’d either be dead, locked up, or in a mental ward somewhere.

I try not to relive the past because that’s just what it is. I can only look forward to what the future has to offer me. And that is a new sober life with Christian people, sober friends, AA (Alcoholics Anonymous), and God.

“If you’re gonna kill yourself, don’t do it in my place!”

Because you gave ...

Lam Ho is no longer throwing away his life — and thousands of dollars — on drugs and booze.

Instead, he is living at our Mission. Embracing his new faith in Christ (he was raised Buddhist). And greatly admired by the men who now work under him.

He’s come a long way — literally — since he first set foot on American soil after leaving Vietnam.

Always hardworking, Lam quickly got a good job working in a Japanese restaurant. But his new

friends quickly turned out to be his worst enemies when they introduced him to

“God brought me to the Mission to teach me how to walk with Him and know about Him,”

alcohol, then crack cocaine. Eventually, he even got involved in a gang that would rob houses to get money to buy drugs.

Spending up to \$1,000 a day on drugs almost ruined Lam. He lost his car and his house. Then he came down with a mysterious skin rash all over his body.

After a doctor treated him, he told Lam to go home. “I don’t have a home,” Lam told him. “I don’t know where to go.” It was the doctor who suggested Lam go to the Union Gospel Mission.

Since coming here, Lam’s future has brightened considerably.

Now Lam prays several hours a day, especially when he begins to miss his family in Vietnam. “It warms my heart,” he says.

As a supervisor, Lam also regularly oversees dozens of men at the Mission.

“He’s a servant-leader,” says resident manager Mike Kukuska, explaining that Lam doesn’t just give orders, but works right alongside the men, whether they’re mopping floors, stacking chairs, or making beds.

“God brought me to the Mission to teach me how to walk with Him and know about Him,” Lam says.



Lam enjoys working alongside the men he supervises — even in the mundane tasks like doing laundry.

Special Easter Call to Action

As we prepare for the Easter season here at the Union Gospel Mission, we have several critical needs, including:

- Bible-oriented, easy-to-understand books about parenting
- New pillows and pillowcases
- Full and twin-sized sheets
- Comforters
- Towels (all sizes)
- Women’s and children’s underwear/socks
- Men’s boxers (sizes 30/32 & 34/36)
- Heavy-duty professional vacuum for the LifeNet program

If you can help by donating any of these items, please contact (name) at (phone number).

Point of no return

(continued from page 1)

Gateway program?

“Sure,” he admits. “But this time, I’m not gonna play around with this thing (drugs). I’m not living under a bridge with nowhere to go, where your only viable means of survival is to commit crimes.”

He continues, “I have people who are looking at me and what this new program represents. I want to be successful, for myself and for other ex-cons. I want them to look at me and feel like, ‘If this guy can do it, I can do it!’”

Easter is a time for restoration and renewal. And you have helped restore Ronald’s life, and the lives of hundreds of others right here in the Twin Cities, with your gifts to the Union Gospel Mission.

Thank you for your kindness — and making our community a better place for all of us!