ENGAGE

01

ENGAGE MY CITY MAGAZINE







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OF EXPONENTIAL IMPACT FOR THE CITY

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TO ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS

AND PROVIDE TRANSFORMATIVE SOLUTIONS

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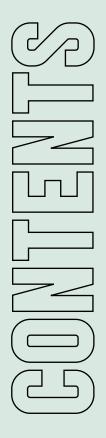
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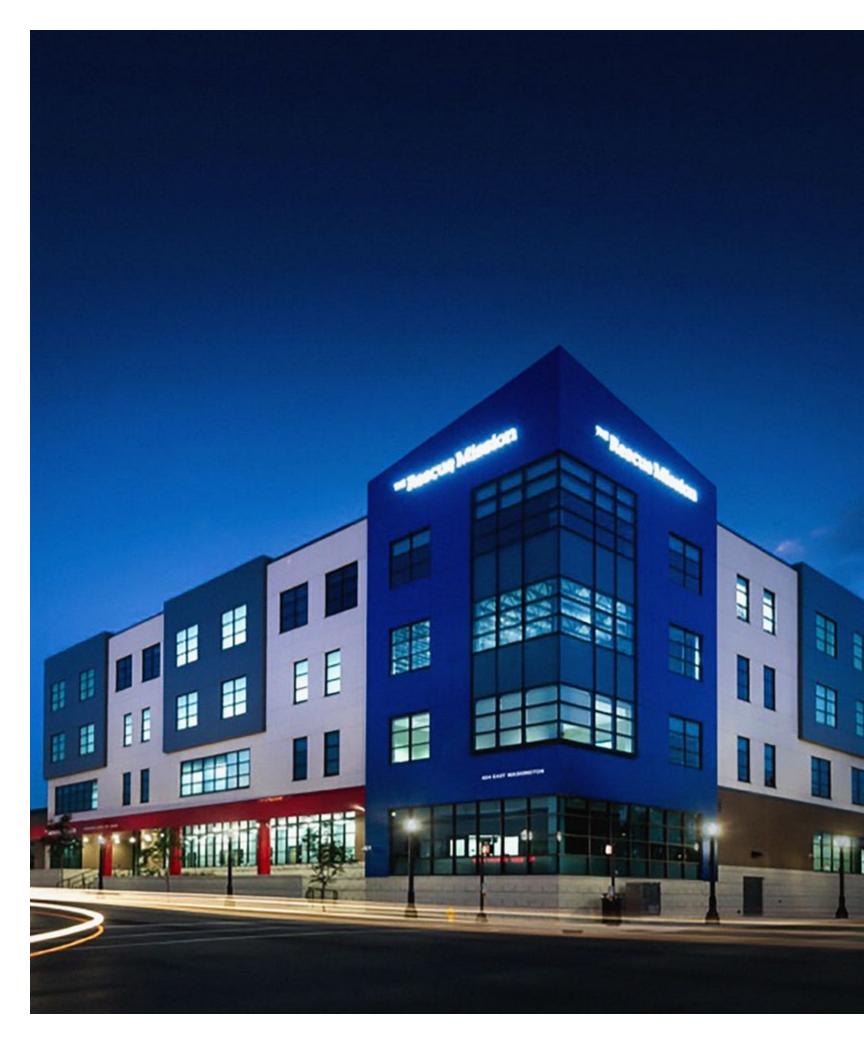
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EXPONENTIAL IMPACT FOR THE CITY

Hand-in-Hand Against Homelessness

WRITTEN BY TIFFANY GARDNER

THERE

is a proverb that states "it takes a village to

raise a child," but what does it take to intentionally serve the homeless community in a city? It takes collaboration – a unity in purpose and determination resulting in a relentless pursuit of transformation. The Rescue Mission has learned the vital importance of this collaboration as they seek "to provide, through the power of Jesus Christ, a home for the homeless, food for the hungry, and hope for their future." This is no small mission and one which cannot be fully accomplished on their own.

As a member of Citygate Network, The Rescue Mission is always seeking to learn from other organizations around the United States as they serve the homeless in their cities. Citygate Network serves as the network where leaders of over 300 such agencies find the training, resources, and support they need to serve the individuals and families who arrive on their doorsteps every day of the year.² This networking leads to new ideas and new programs improving the effectiveness of The Rescue Mission in Fort Wayne.

Part of this innovation is identifying partnerships that offer resources to provide wholistic care to those being served at the Mission. One of these partners is Parkview Behavioral Health Institute (PBHI). This was identified as a necessary partnership as mental health issues are becoming increasingly prevalent in those served at The Rescue Mission. Many coming to the Mission for shelter were unable to stay due to

behavioral issues related to mental illness. Partnering with organizations to assist in this area has allowed residents to enter programming and have transformational success without their mental health becoming an inhibiting factor. One of the ways PBHI serves The Rescue Mission is by having a presence at their facility Monday through Friday. This allows residents to have access to medication, a walk-in clinic, and advocates to assist throughout their healing journey.

Access to resources is such an important part of empowering the homeless community in our city. The Rescue Mission has a Community Resource Center in their facility which provides offices, conference rooms, and computer stations to remove the barrier in allowing residents

to access community resources. This space is utilized by organizations such as Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services. Bowen Center, Parkview Behavioral Health Institute, and Brightpoint. These partners are selected strategically to add value for the residents at The Rescue Mission. They are selected out of relationship in which senior leadership from both organizations meet to discuss how they desire impact in the city and determine if there is alignment. Whereas The Rescue Mission is an unashamedly Christcentered organization, they understand not every partner will share those beliefs. They seek to partner with those who believe in being a positive influence and value mutual respect regardless of varying beliefs.

Being a part of conversations on how to better serve those who are vulnerable in our community is vital for The Rescue Mission as they seek collaboration. One of the ways they are exposed to some of these conversations is by having a presence at CONNECT Allen County on Rudisill Boulevard, a

"one-stop shop community access center helping youth, families, and individuals get information on the resources and supports that are available and how to access them."3 This collaboration involves over 26 nonprofits and social service providers in Allen County and has become a point of networking for The Rescue Mission when seeking organizations to join the Community Resource Center. Engaging in conversations with other organizations and shelters in the city that are working with the same population in Fort Wayne allows for greater collaboration as well. The Rescue Mission embodies the message of "being on the same team" with organizations such as The Lighthouse, Inspiration Ministries, Just Neighbors and The Salvation Army. They are a resource to each other as they work towards similar goals.

While the idea of collaboration is noble, the accomplishment of it is a challenge. There is always a desire for more people to be at the collaborative table as the needs are great, and the opportunities are endless. Awareness can also be a

challenge as after 119 years of serving this community, many are still not aware of the full scope of The Rescue Mission's desire for impact in the city. It is not about giving a handout or solving a symptom. The Rescue

must identify barriers The Rescue Mission faces as they serve our community. Funding and volunteers are two areas that in abundance are a huge blessing but, when lacking, present a gap. For many

"THE RESCUE MISSION IS WORKIN ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSE OF HOM PROVIDE TRANSFORMATIVE SOLUT IN LASTING CHANGE."

Mission is working tirelessly to address the root cause of homelessness and provide transformative solutions which result in lasting change. This awareness creates opportunity for collaboration with partners that have a likeminded mission for increased impact.

As we evaluate how we might be a piece of that collaborative puzzle, we organizations, COVID-19 caused necessary pivots, some of which were painful. For The Rescue Mission, this included volunteers no longer able to assist onsite. As the Mission is now able to have volunteers come back into the building, the magnitude of the need is just as prevalent as it has ever been in our city. Approximately 3,000 are



homeless in our city every night, and volunteers that offer their time and talent fill gaps to allow even greater impact. Whether it is becoming a mentor, serving meals, or answering the phone, The Rescue Mission

ELESSNESS AND ONS WHICH RESULT

is seeking those who love Jesus and want to see those He loves in our city become transformed by His power and love.

Collaboration requires ownership and participation. When identifying a need that is close to the Father's heart, how can we not respond with a humble offering of ourselves, allowing His heart to drive our hands to action?



NEEDED ITEMS

If you're interested in donating to The Rescue Mission, here are a few of their regular needs:



TRAVEL SHAMPOO AND SOAP



DISPOSABLE RAZORS



SHOWER FLIP-FLOPS (ALL SIZES)



BATH TOWELS



Did you know a lack of trustworthy relationships is the number one cause of homelessness?

WRITTEN BY HOLLIE BOYLES

hen seeing a homeless person on the sidewalk asking for money, have you ever had the thought: "Why don't they just get a job?" Or have you ever thought that homeless people are lazy and could find housing if they really wanted? I think we all have had these thoughts at least once, including myself. Truth be told, though, there are several causes of homelessness, and no one sets out wanting to be homeless. In researching homelessness and displaced living, I've realized we are all just one traumatic event away from being homeless ourselves. One accident. One loss of a job. One divorce. One natural disaster. One. That is all it takes to go from being in a sheltered, loving home to being on the streets with no roof over your head. This is not to cause fear, but to encourage education on the homeless issue in our country, state, and city, and to be grateful for our amenities.

Some causes of homelessness are more common than others. According to the Atlanta Mission in Atlanta, Georgia, "lack of trustworthy relationships" is the most common cause of homelessness. "We all want to be close to family, have someone to call a friend or mentor, someone that we can go to when times get tough, or when we simply

need a little guidance to put us back on the right path." When a traumatic event takes place, who do you call? What if you did not have that person in your life? This is the case for many that are homeless. Something happens in their lives that causes them to lose their housing, and they do not have anyone to turn to for help. This lack of relationship could be because they live far from family or do not have any family alive anymore to help them. Sometimes, the relationship is severed due to addiction or mental illness, and friends or family are unable to help them. Either way, they have no one to turn to and they end up sleeping outside.

When I was 20 years old, I almost experienced homelessness due to my dad becoming ill and losing his job. Luckily, we had a great relationship with my grandparents, and they paid for us to get an apartment so we would not have to sleep outside. If we did not have that trustworthy relationship, my family and I would have been on the streets. It happened overnight and my life was changed, but it could have been so much worse if we would not have had someone to turn to when a crisis hit. This is just how easily it happens for the displaced person sleeping on the sidewalk.

911 PINE HILLS CHURCH

PHYSICAL ILLNESS

Illness is another cause of homelessness. Physical illness and disability do not happen by choice. Inability to work, waiting to qualify for disability due to extreme illness, and not having the funds to pay for housing can cause one to be homeless. Medical bills accrue quickly, and funds are spent even quicker just trying to stay afloat. If you are unable to work due to illness, how do you afford to eat and live in your home? Many people are faced with this question daily.

MENTAL ILLNESS

Along with physical illness, mental illness can take a toll on people and lead to an inability to pay bills, function properly, or provide for themselves and their family. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 20-25% of the homeless population suffers from some form of mental illness. "Serious mental illnesses disrupt people's ability to carry out essential aspects of daily life, such as self-care and household management. Mental illnesses may also prevent people from forming and maintaining stable relationships or cause people to misinterpret others' guidance and react irrationally."5 Mental illness is difficult in and of itself but enduring it alone can be the final straw that sends someone to the streets.

ADDICTION

Addiction and substance abuse is another leading cause of homelessness. Families will show "tough love" due to one's addiction, and in turn, that person becomes homeless. Addiction causes the brain to think it needs a certain substance to survive. In turn, the addict goes to the street instead of living in a safe environment. It is easy to think that this would be an easy decision: quit the drugs and stay at home. Unfortunately, that is not how addiction works. Once on the street, the addict continues to use, and street drugs become easier to come by. The homeless addict can suffer from diseases transmitted from injecting drugs with used needles or even an overdose. This happens too often. "Half of the mentally ill homeless population in the United States also suffers from substance abuse and dependence."6 Lack of availability to detox and the inability to cope alone can cause the addiction to worsen, threatening their lives.

ABUSE

Abuse is another major cause of homelessness. "More than 90% of women experiencing homelessness attest to some form of physical or sexual abuse during their lifetime." Abuse leaves survivors nowhere to turn due to lack of safety and confidentiality. If given the chance to flee that

situation, survivors run as fast as they can, and sometimes that means they live on the streets so they cannot be found by their abusers. They are scared and vulnerable and fear traceability from their abusers, so they stay hidden on the streets.

PERSONAL HARDSHIPS

Personal hardships can cause homelessness as well. Personal hardships are events that are out of our control. such as natural disasters, divorce, or toxic relationships. Financial status can change instantly in these circumstances and leave someone without a home to live in. Insurance may not cover damages from a tornado causing a person to question where to turn. When a partner leaves, the financial situation changes drastically and can cause someone to be without a home. Personal hardships can happen in the blink of an eye and affect a life immensely.

FEELING THE LOVE

When helping with the homeless community in Nashville, Tennessee, I learned so much about the people I met. They were just like me and needed community. Some suffered from mental illness and addiction, while others were veterans or displaced due to personal hardship. Nonetheless, they craved community and love, just like me. While being homeless, they formed



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friendships and their own community where they belonged for the first time in their lives. They felt like they could not return to normal living because they would not fit in. They formed bonds with each other and wanted that love to last forever. They were afraid to leave their friends behind, due to the inability to communicate because of the lack of a cell phone or mailing address. Sometimes, they did not see the value in a home because of the lack of love they had

people have physical needs that they need met, but the biggest need we all have is community and to be loved and seen. By just standing there and not doing thing after thing, you create a bond and community that can sustain people through so much." This challenged me to think about how I am loving others.

YOUR OWN THOUGHTS

When thinking of these causes of homelessness, what crosses your mind? Are you humbled by the fact that any-

fer? I know I am convicted even more so when it comes to the homeless community. "A righteous man knows the rights of the poor; a wicked man does not understand such knowledge" (Proverbs 29:7, ESV). This verse should challenge us to learn more and understand the homeless issue rather than ignore it. When we truly learn about others' lives, we put ourselves in their shoes and love them like Jesus.

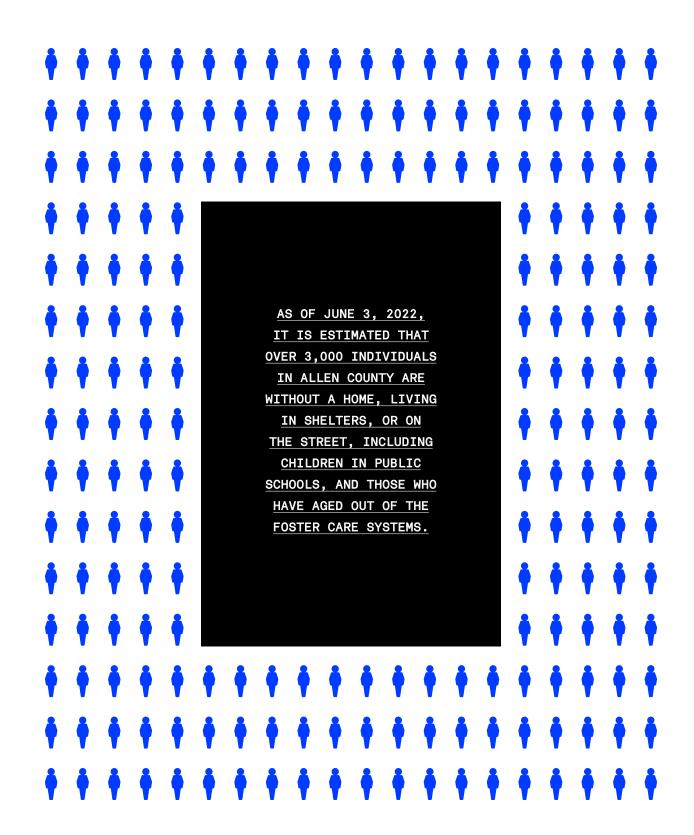
Friar Gregory Boyle once said, "Here is what we seek:

"DON'T JUST DO SOMETHING, STAND THERE." —RYAN LAMPA

experienced when they had one. They would rather remain homeless than return to a life of abuse or hate. How sad is it to feel love on a street corner more than in your own home?

Ryan Lampa of People Loving Nashville, on the topic of loving the homeless and getting to know them, said, "I'm sure you've heard of the saying, 'Don't just stand there, do something.' But we like to say, 'Don't just do something, stand there.' Most one can become homeless in an instant after a traumatic event happens? Is your heart softened to the man or woman you see on the side of the road, thinking they do not deserve this? When you see them, do you pray for them and wonder how you can help, rather than judge their homelessness as an act they can control? Do you see them and wonder if they have ever known the true love of Jesus or only what the streets have to ofa compassion that can stand in awe of what the poor have to carry rather than stand in judgement at how they carry it." Let's be a church and a people who changes the stigma of homelessness from that of laziness or someone just looking for a handout to one of compassion, love, and understanding.

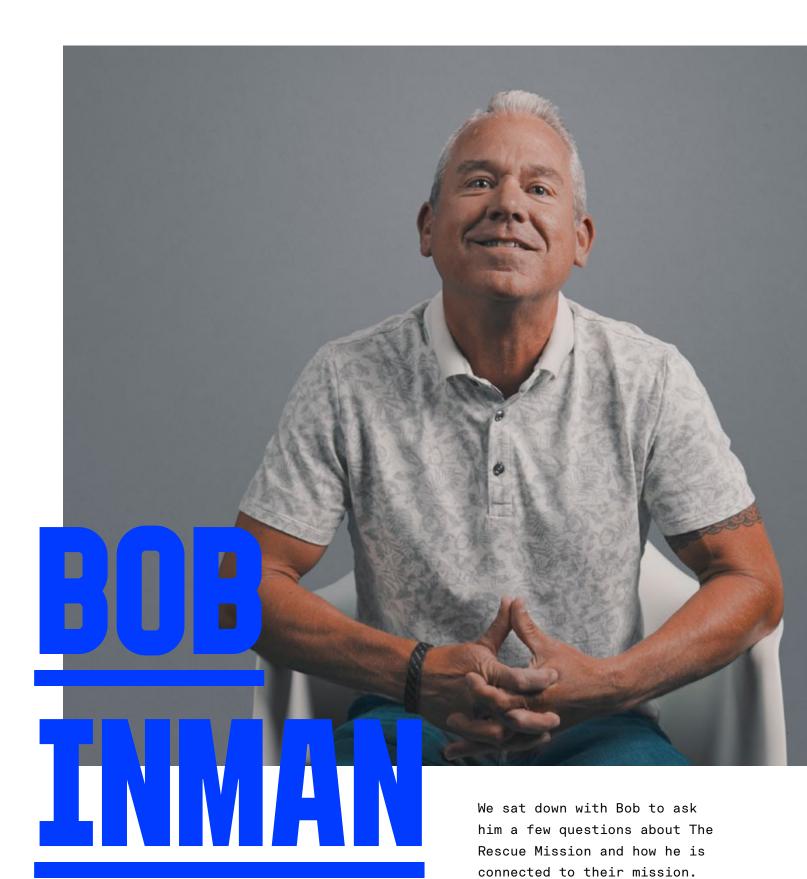
013 PINE HILLS CHURCH



AS OF JANUARY 2020, INDIANA HAS AN ESTIMATED
5,625 EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS ON ANY GIVEN DAY.

530 482 **FAMILIES VETERANS** 266 403 **UNACCOMPANIED YOUNG** INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING ADULTS (AGES 18-24) CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

THESE STATISTICS WERE PRODUCED BY USICH.GOV



ob Inman has been attending Pine Hills
Church since August 2019. He became a
member in February 2021 and currently
serves on the Local Outreach team as a
liaison to The Rescue Mission. We sat down with
Bob to ask him a few questions about The Rescue
Mission and how he is connected to their mission.

TALK TO ME ABOUT THE RESCUE MISSION. WHAT DO THEY DO AND HOW DO YOU SERVE?

The Rescue Mission is a faith-based, non-profit organization that provides care and hope to men, women, and children experiencing homelessness in the city of Fort Wayne and surrounding counties.

At the beginning of 2021, I met with Tiffany Gardner and asked if there were any opportunities to serve at Pine Hills Church. I just wanted to serve in whatever capacity. She mentioned a need for a liaison to the Rescue Mission and asked if I would be interested in serving in that role. I knew a little about The Rescue Mission as I had a family member (who struggled with addiction) who found themselves homeless for a brief period in their life and utilized The Rescue Mission's resources. So, I said, "Yes" to serving. At that time, The Rescue Mission was still in "quarantine" so there was little for me to do except attend PHC's monthly local outreach team meetings. Eventually, things began to open up, and I had an opportunity to meet with the President/CEO of The Rescue Mission, Donovan Coley, to learn more about their organization and ministry. At the time, there weren't many opportunities to serve at the Mission as they were only allowing a few volunteers in their building. As I was leaving the Mission that day, Donovan was walking me out and we met a resident, Mike, in the lobby area. Donovan suggested Mike and I sit and get to know one another. Mike shared with me a bit about his story and what brought him to The Rescue Mission. Mike shared with me his struggle with alcohol and how it ultimately led him to the Mission.

WHY DO YOU SERVE WITH THE RESCUE MISSION? WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO BE INVOLVED?

For many years I struggled with alcohol addiction. Today, I am free from my addiction through God's redeeming grace and the help of a recovery program – a program that I continue to work every day. This program reminds me that I need to spend my day in constant contact with God. It teaches me to surrender to God's will every day.

On June 23, 2020, I received the gift of sobriety. In order to keep that gift, I must give it away. Serving is essential to my recovery. As I serve others, I am serving God and I believe this is His will for me.

When I met with Mike, I shared my story. I also told him about some nearby recovery meetings within walking distance of The Rescue Mission. Over the course of a few weeks, I ran into him at one of those meetings and we talked and shared more. Ultimately, he asked if I would sponsor him and work with him as a part of his recovery. We meet every week to work through the program and share our experiences, strength, and hope.

Working with others who are struggling with the same things I struggled with (addiction, fear, pride, past hurts) is a way God continues to redeem my story and use it for His glory.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO OTHERS WHO MIGHT BE CONSIDERING SERVING?

I would encourage you to share your story with others. As you serve, God can use your story to bring encouragement, hope, and love to someone. That's how this works!

HOW TO

Talk to Your Kids About Homelessness

WRITTEN BY MADDI BAGAN

HOW DO WE TALK TO OUR CHILDREN ABOUT HOMELESSNESS?

Before attempting the conversation with a child, we must first look inward. What do you believe about homelessness? Do you know the causes of homelessness? What were you taught as a child? There are a lot of beliefs we carry with us that may be misguided.

First and foremost, homelessness is a crisis and is caused by a crisis. Please do not lead your kids into the misguided assumption that these are lazy people who are unwilling to get a job. We are talking about people, fellow image-bearers who have the right to dignity and respect. Each person has a unique story and trying to summarize

each person's story into a single cause (especially laziness) is a grave disservice to the person. However, if we must, the most basic root cause of homelessness is isolation. Do not confuse isolation with loneliness. Isolation refers to a lack of community. Community may not seem like a base-need, but it is so important. For most of us, when we need help, we can reach out to family or friends. We have people in our lives who would support us even if we did not ask them.

Imagine for a moment that you lost your job by no real fault of your own. Perhaps, you have savings that keep you afloat. Then, imagine the savings have been used. It is a challenging economy and you have not found a job. What do you do? How do you pay for childcare to interview for jobs or keep the job? How do you pay for food? How do you keep the lights on? How do you manage your stress? Do you sell your house? Are you even able to rent or buy something more manageable without a job first?

More than likely, a friend, family member, or connection appeared in your answers. But what if you did not have those? When having this conversation with anyone, but especially children, we must be sensitive and make sure we are entering it with a humble heart. The best way to talk to your children about homelessness is to ask your child questions and give them the space and opportunity to ask their own questions.

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HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS TO GET STARTED:

WHAT DO YOU THINK IT MEANS TO BE HOMELESS?

HOW DO YOU THINK SOMEONE BECOMES HOMELESS?

HOW DOES IT MAKE YOU
FEEL WHEN YOU SEE A
PERSON WHO IS HOMELESS?

WHAT DO YOU THINK WE COULD DO TO HELP?



Based on your child's answers, ask more questions. For example, my son answered that the cause was because they do not have a job, the solution was to get them a job, and we could help them by giving money.

Help them go deeper by asking, "What if someone is unable to get a job? What if they are sick or hurt? Where do you think you would go if you ran out of money or did not have a job? Who would you ask for help?"

If you feel that your children are old enough to talk about drugs, alcohol, and addiction, you can talk about how the majority of money given on the streets is used for these. Talk about how meeting their actual needs is better than giving money.

Talk about how helping someone when they enter a crisis is the best way to help prevent homelessness. Keep your eyes open for people without community and be willing to step in as part of their community.

Try to make it personal. Share a crisis situation in your life and how the help of others got you through it. Share what might have happened if you had not had that kind of support.

Parenting is challenging work. You do not have to know all the answers. Just help your children understand we are talking about people with stories and real struggles. Help them understand how important it is to have community in their lives. Help them have grateful hearts for the community they do have. Finally, when talking about homelessness to your children, help them have hearts that are compassionate rather than self-righteous.





CECIL JONES

Resident at The Rescue Mission



"When I first started on the painting I wasn't sure what subject to choose. Then I said to myself, why not try a moon over the lake. This was the third time I have painted this subject.

At the addictions program I was at in West Lafayette, I was introduced to painting as a way to express myself or relax. I have never thought of myself as artistic but by following the guide from the internet I found, it was easier than I expected. There, I had the right colors, brushes, and items needed to help me.

In life, I have found that having everything I need isn't always available. I have to pursue and mix and change as life goes on. I have started again to achieve a good life more than three times. I have had to have help, counseling, therapy, and guidance.

While the painting is complete, although I could add more, I can understand that my life is never complete. Working and using all the tools I can allows me to paint a scene that I can look back on and feel some accomplishment."







YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

When we read these words and pray this prayer, sometimes in reality we mean this...

"Your kingdom come if it looks a lot like mine. Your will be done if it aligns with what I desire. On earth, as it is in heaven as long as it's a consequence-free, painless pursuit of pleasure and happiness in my day-to-day life."

Coming to accept the true reality of how Jesus taught us to pray means we also understand that we are praying "not my kingdom but Yours, not my will but Yours, not my control or comfort or timeline but Yours."

WHOSE KINGDOM ARE YOU BUILDING?

Over the next 4 weeks we will be identifying, reflecting on, and surrendering four different idols that block our ability to build His kingdom, follow His will, engage our city, and live with the great commission at the forefront of our minds.⁹

THE IDOLS OF POWER + APPROVAL

When we are fueled by the impact we make on others or have an unchecked desire to be liked and recognized as a person with influence, idols of power and approval are likely the cause of our misplaced worth and identity.

The idol of power tends to make us feel burdened and solely responsible for outcomes that otherwise should be in God's control. We are afraid of being humiliated. We fear that someone else will receive the credit for our work and the things we are building for ourselves. This fear expresses itself in anger and frustration, resulting in selfish decision-making and causing others to feel used or manipulated.

When the idol of approval takes up space in our hands, we forever chase an unquenchable longing for our full selves to be received or desired. We trade our independence to grasp acceptance. This overly tolerant pride promises a rejection-free life but falls flat under the weight of fear, self-sabotage, and a loss of confidence as we smother our values and drain the life out of those whom we love.

These two idols stacked on top of each other often form the foundational motivation behind our desire to build our kingdom and rule our world. They keep us blind to the needs and realities of others. They treat people as platforms and footstools for our own progress and success. They devalue the desolate.

"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." Daniel 7:13-14 (NIV)

When we say "Your Kingdom Come," we choose to subject ourselves to God's power, authority, and approval in our lives. This is hard for many of us because choosing to build His kingdom often means the ruin and reshaping of our own.



CENTERING PRAYER

We will be using a version of centering prayer this week to connect more deeply with the phrase "Your Kingdom Come." Try to spend at least five minutes in prayer and silent reflection. As an added challenge, commit to doing this practice each morning for one week.

Sit comfortably with your eyes closed. Take a minute to breathe deeply. Then silently, inwardly, begin to think about the word KINGDOM. Try not to force your thoughts. Ask Jesus to keep that word at the forefront of your mind. As you sit quietly, remember you are welcome to rest in the presence of God. If you feel distracted, acknowledge any feelings, reflections, or thoughts that come to mind, and gently return to the word KINGDOM. After sitting in this space of focus for a few minutes, ask Jesus if there is anything he would like to reveal to you about the word KINGDOM in your life.

AT THE END OF YOUR PRAYER TIME, OPEN YOUR EYES, AND CONCLUDE THIS PRACTICE BY SAYING THE LORD'S PRAYER ALOUD.

Our Father in heaven, holy is your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Amen.

THERE'S NEVER BEEN A KINGDOM LIKE HIS

WHERE THE POOR IN SPIRIT ARE THE RICHEST

WHEN YOU'RE CRUSHED HE COMES IN

BINDS YOUR HEART IN HIS HANDS

THAT'S JUST WHO HE IS

"MERCY" BY TAYA

WRITTEN BY CHRYSTAL WENT



30 BIBLICAL NEIGHBORING

THERE ARE THREE SIMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK
WHEN IT COMES TO BIBLICAL NEIGHBORING: WHY
SHOULD WE NEIGHBOR? HOW DO WE NEIGHBOR?
WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

36 STRENGTHENING & SERVING A NEIGHBORHOOD

SINCE 2003, NEIGHBORLINK'S MISSION HAS REMAINED THE SAME: TO PROVIDE PRACTICAL EXPRESSIONS OF GOD'S LOVE TO OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED.

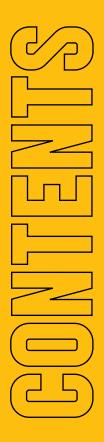
42 ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

WE ASKED THREE LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHERS

TO COLLABORATE ON A VISUAL PIECE TO
REPRESENT NEIGHBORING.

44 INDEPENDENCE THROUGH NEIGHBORING

WE SAT DOWN WITH TERRY DORAN, A FORT
WAYNE NATIVE, TO SEE HOW NEIGHBORLINK
HAS IMPACTED HIS LIFE IN RECENT YEARS.



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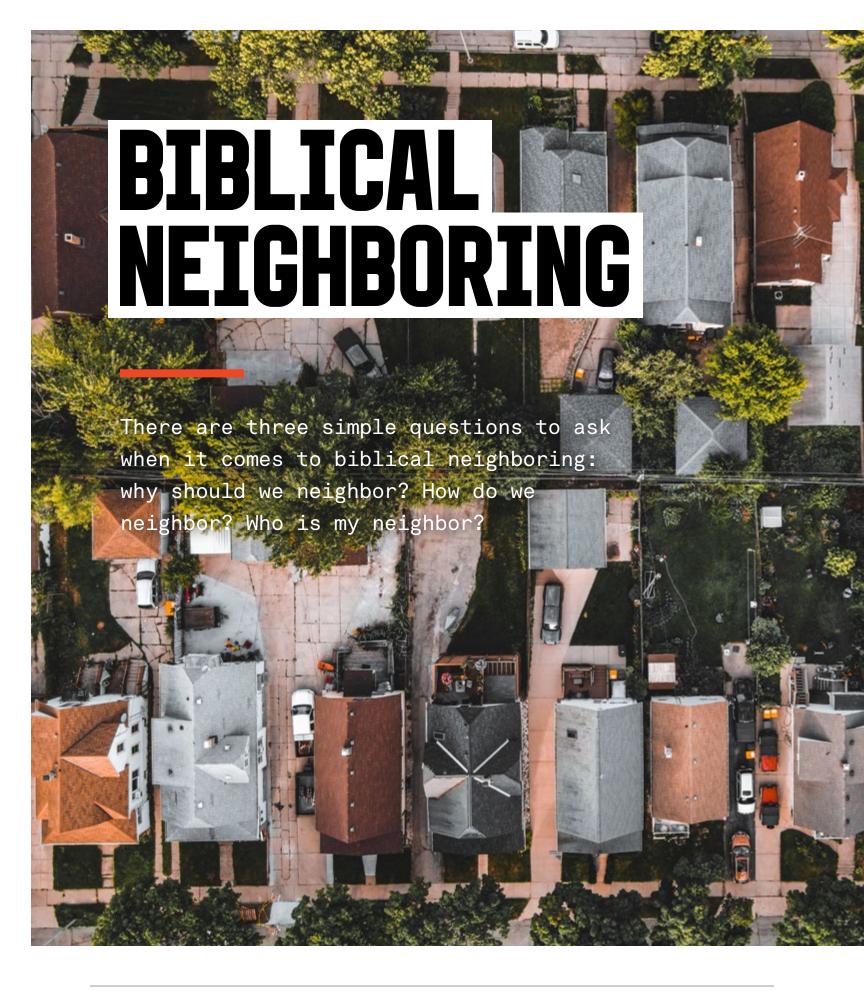
46 YOUR WILL BE DONE

IF THERE WAS EVER A QUESTION IN OUR MINDS

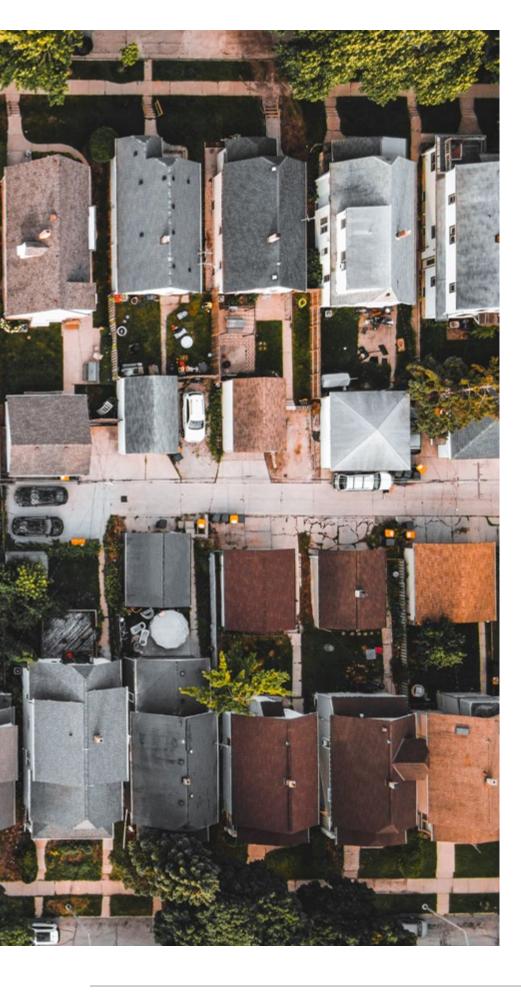
IF GOD'S CONTROL IS CORRUPT OR HIS PLANS

WITHOUT PURPOSE, WE NEED ONLY TO LOOK TO

THE GOSPEL AS PROOF OF HIS PERFECTION.



ISSUE 01



WRITTEN BY RICK LESSING

GOD'S CALL FOR NEIGHBORING

Fred Rogers was the creator and main character of Mr. Roger's Neighborhood. This program is best known to its viewing audience as a mainstay on PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) for more than three decades, touching several generations. Fred Rogers was a Presbyterian minister who felt led to utilize modern media to help people learn how to help others, beginning with children. At the very beginning of each show Fred changed into more comfortable attire (a cardigan sweater and sneakers) while singing a song which included the phrase: Won't you be my neighbor? So, I have put on my cardigan and sneakers. Now, let's review together a few thoughts concerning what it means to be a neighbor.

THE WHY OF NEIGHBORING

The first question that comes to mind is: "Why neighbor?" The short answer is because "to neighbor" is at the heart of the Gospel. To be sure, "neighboring" is not the Gospel. The Gospel is clearly defined by Paul (1 Cor. 15:1–5) as what Jesus has done: His life, His substitutionary self-sacrifice & death as an atonement for our sins and His bodily resurrection. It is what HE has done and not what you or I can do. It is not the soup kitchen that saves a soul. However, it can be a means to draw the lost, to fill

the Great Commission (Mat. 28:18-19). It was a personal call to His mission to GO with the purposes of making disciples, baptizing them, and teaching the rudiments of the faith. This calling was to move them outside the familiar and outside of their comfort zones. This mission was further clarified in scope as Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost ends of the earth (Acts 1:8-9). Jerusalem was a beginning point, Judea was still their comfort zone, Samaria was to engage the disenfranchised and God's work to crumble their prejudices, and the uttermost was to include Gentiles (those they

His call to "neighbor:" "What God has made clean, do not call unclean." God's mission for Peter was to preach the Gospel to a group of Gentiles and to witness God's transforming power...in spite of him. The Blackabys in their book Hearing God's Voice say it this way:

"IF WE TRULY ARE EXPERIENCING THE
PERSONAL BENEFITS OF THE TRANSFORMATIONAL
POWER OF THE GOSPEL, THEN THAT OUGHT TO
COMPEL US TO HAVE COMPASSION FOR THOSE
AROUND US WHO HAVE NOT."

the tummy so that the ears can be more receptive to the message of Christ's work on the cross. If we truly are experiencing the personal benefits of the transformational power of the Gospel, then THAT ought to compel us to have compassion for those around us who have not. After all, we are ALL a broken people—sinners, who without God's grace, would be in deep trouble, with both physical and spiritual needs.

One of the parting thoughts that Jesus had for His disciples has been labeled initially thought were outside of God's covenant and grace).

It makes me smile how God so gently brought this calling to bare in the lives of the disciples, particularly Peter. It is recorded in Acts (ch.10) that while Peter was taking an afternoon siesta, God gave him a dream/vision of a banquet of "unclean animals" (non-kosher in the Jewish tradition) with the declaration: "Take and eat." Peter was absolutely repulsed by this notion, yet God rehearsed/repeated the same encounter three times in order to prepare Peter for

Peter was basically a bigot who considered all races other than his own to be unclean. His views were socially acceptable in his culture, and they merely reflected what he had been raised to believe. But... God corrected Peter.

The upside to this scenario is that God used Peter just as he was, blemishes and all, which is promising for you and I because He is wanting to use us for His mission to become the hands and feet of Jesus and lend a helping hand to reach a lost and hurting world.



Another main motivation for "neighboring" ought to be appreciating the value of our fellow human beings and of ourselves. Unlike the secular, materialist worldview that we are nothing more than groupings of cells, connected with neurons and motivated by hormones, God sees us in a totally different light. We are made in His image, in His likeness (Gen. 1:26-27) as He crafted Adam with His own hands and breathed into his nostrils and Adam became a living soul (Gen. 2:7). We are uniquely built with a homing device toward our Creator and are designed to be on His frequency. We are designed to have fellowship - to commune - with the God of the universe. As David writes: "We are fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalms 139:13-14). We are not an accident, a mistake, or a happenstance. We are made with purpose and by design.

Even despite Adam's sin and corruption, the image of God resides still. We are not as we ought to be in our state and stance before God. Yet, He provided the means to bring us back into right relationship through Jesus, His Son, the Second Adam. "For God so loved (Agape) the world that He sent His Son" (Jn. 3:16). He did not abandon us; rather, He put some skin in the game to redeem us from our present & eternal predicament.

Thus, in our "neighboring," we become participants in His handiwork (Eph. 2:10). We become ministers of His reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18 – 20a). We become agents for change. We become part of the solution and not part of the problem.

THE HOW-TO OF NEIGHBORING

Another question that comes to mind is: "So, how do I neighbor? What do I do, exactly?" Fortunately for us, Jesus modeled this in an interaction with a religious person:

"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Upon these two commandments hang the whole Law and the Prophets." Matt. 22: 34 – 40 NASB

Here, Jesus teaches us a wholistic, Christian worldview which encompasses the vertical (a right relationship with God), the beneficiary/facilitator (you & I and our identity in Jesus), and the horizontal (God's grace extended to those around us). Yet, the key that unlocks this healthy dynamic is the meaning and appreciation of the word "love": AGAPE.

Clive Staples Lewis is best known for the children's books, The Chronicles of Narnia. Few know that his actual profession was as a philologist and professor at Cambridge in England. A profound and prolific Christian writer, one of his tomes was The Four Loves, explaining the four words used for "love" in the Greek language as well as the New Testament. There is storge, the family kind of love and eros, the erotic, passionate love, neither of which are found in the New Testament or Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament). Then, there is phileo, a friendship kind of love, and, finally, agape, God's self-giving kind of love. It is this last usage that Jesus homes in on the "HOW" to live a full life and to neighbor well.

The word "agape" was used by the philosophers of old to express a godly virtue yet lacked definition until Jesus. It is Jesus and the writers of the New Testament who took the corner market on that word and gave it meaning. Jesus lived it, breathed it, and modelled it. Thus, no longer does it have the abstract, ethereal, transcendent "feeling" of the philosophers. It has the roll up your sleeves and give of yourself kind of meaning. It is the kind of giving with no expectation of a reciprocal return.



It is God's kind of love. The apostle John writes that "God is agape" (1 Jn. 4:8,16). It is His very nature. It is who He is, not just what He does. Jesus is the embodiment of agape: "For God so agaped the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life." (Jn. 3:16)

We are commanded by Jesus to agape: "I am giving you a new commandment, that you agape one another; just as I have agaped you, that you also agape one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples: if you have agape for one another." (Jn. 13:34-35) This illustrates that agape love is not based on an emotion or feeling. It is a conscious decision to follow Jesus and love people like He did: not because they deserve it or meet a certain qualification. This decisive action is countercultural and a contrast to how the "world" measures and treats each other.

Agape is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), not of our spirit, but the Holy Spirit. It is the process of becoming more like Jesus and His character. The other fruits seem to flow out of agape through our everyday lives as we interact with those around us during our daily challenges. For how can we truly become

Christlike in patience or longsuffering without, for example, being teamed up in a project with someone who we absolutely dislike? How about joy, peace, and kindness? These carry no meaning with a Lone Ranger view of Christianity.

HOW DO WE AGAPE?

Let's get back to the interaction between Jesus and the religious professional. How do we agape God? With a full, no holds barred devotion. It is a conscious decision not based upon "if I feel like it." [This is not to say that emotions are not involved in our affections for our God is personable and delights in our emotional responses to Him. However, the decision to agape is not based upon emotions.] How does one agape oneself? This is not a self-centered, egotistical love. This a proper view of oneself as to how God loves (agapes) you. It is an actualization of your identity in Christ, Who took your sins upon Himself, so that you and I can live abundant, full lives, here and for eternity. Then, how does one agape their neighbor? First, we agape those around us because they are made in the image of God. Their value, worth and dignity resides in Who made them and how they are made. Additionally, Jesus died for them. Because Jesus agapes them and gave His life for them, we ought to agape them as well.

James writes about confirming one's faith with action:

What use is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? James 2:14-16 NASB

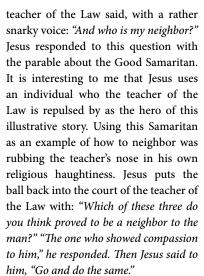
John also writes:

But whoever has worldly goods and sees his brother or sister in need, and closes his heart against him, how does the agape of God remain in him? Little children, let's not agape with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. 1 Jn. 3:17-18 NASB

THE WHO OF NEIGHBORING

This begs the question: "Well, then, who is my neighbor?" In Luke 10:25-37, a





CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON NEIGHBORING

Why should we neighbor? Because Jesus lived it, modeled it, and commissioned us to do likewise on His behalf. How do we neighbor? Because Jesus first loved us and gave His life for us, we ought to love others, have compassion, and meet them at the intersection of their need: both material and spiritual. Who is my neighbor? The one who is in need.

STRENGTHENING & SERVING A NEIGHBORHOOD

"NeighborLink was founded on grace and forgiveness. Ultimately, we believe that those who have been forgiven much, love much."

WRITTEN BY ROBERT JOHNSON

ince 2003, NeighborLink's mission has remained the same: to provide practical expressions of God's love to our neighbors in need.

Christ's love for us compels us to love Him back; His compassion for people motivates us to love our neighbors well. By serving others, we believe we are fulfilling this mission as Christ intended.

Thanks to GPS technology, volunteers can use our web-based platform to safely link up with local neighbors in need. From basic tasks such as yard work, painting, and snow removal to more skilled projects such as wheelchair ramp construction, roof repair, or plumbing needs, our goal is to remove as many barriers to loving our neighbors as possible.

NeighborLink was founded on grace and forgiveness. Ultimately, we believe

that those who have been forgiven much, love much. This compels us to love God and others in tangible, neighborly ways. It leads us toward the margins of our city where life is tough, money is in short supply, the hurting find no help, and our elders age alone. With our network of local volunteers, we are privileged to meet many needs of vulnerable homeowners that often go unseen.

HOW IT WORKS

Many times, when a person is in desperate need, they begin by reaching out to a wide variety of social services. At this stage, it is not uncommon for individuals to end up in a frustrating loop. They are passed around from one department or organization to the next as hope dwindles and a resolution never seems to reveal

itself. At some point - either at the end of the chain or when a friend makes a timely recommendation - they are referred to us. After taking their call, we add the request to our online bulletin board. Once the need is entered into the system, our volunteers can see the need and respond accordingly.



AN INDIVIDUAL OR

"NEIGHBOR" HAS

A NEED



THE INDIVIDUAL IS
RECOMMENDED TO
NEIGHBORLINK



THE NEED IS ADDED

TO AN ONLINE
BULLETIN BOARD



VOLUNTEERS SEE THE

NEED AND RESPOND

ACCORDINGLY

FOR EXAMPLE

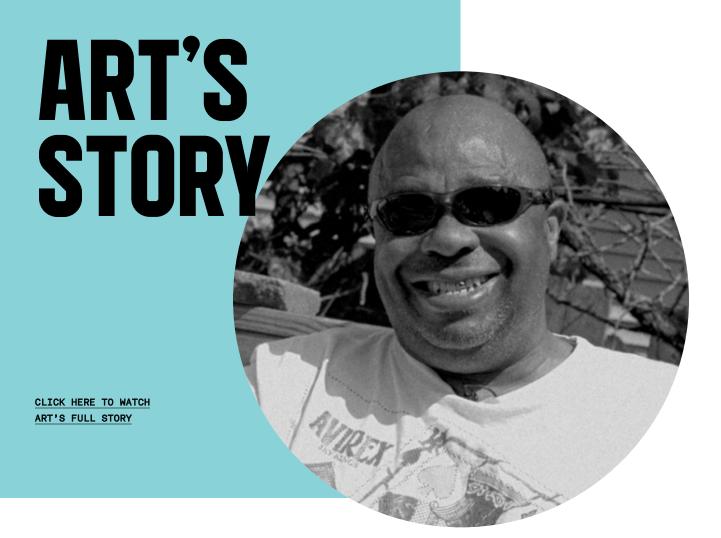
An elderly woman named Janet is on a fixed income and has just received a weed violation from the city. She has no family in the area and her income is too low to pay for lawncare service. After reaching out to NeighborLink, we assign her a project and include the need, along with all the relevant information, to our website. Janet lives near three other neighbors with similar needs, so a volunteer adds each one to a weekly rotation. Every Wednesday, the volunteer picks up a lawnmower and gas can from NeighborLink and spends the morning cutting all four lawns. The entire process takes him about two hours.

After a couple of weeks making the rounds, the volunteer notices Janet has some minor home repair

issues that a friend of his could easily handle. After gaining Janet's permission, he uploads a new project to our website and notifies his friend of the need. A week later, his friend shows up and takes care of the need for Janet. While she was able to pay for the necessary supplies, Janet has saved a bundle on the cost of labor since it was volunteer work.

By the end of the summer, Janet has saved hundreds of dollars in citation fees, lawn care fees, and home repair costs, while gaining two new friends who truly care for her wellbeing. The money she has saved will go toward other important things such as rent, gas, bills, and food. By serving Janet, our volunteers have shared the love and hope of Christ in tangible, meaningful ways.

937 PINE HILLS CHURCH





rt has always loved the outdoors. As a child, his favorite memory was traveling across the country with his father, taking in the sights of each new destination. He would sit and revel

in the beauty of nature for hours, immersed in the colors and views around him. Years later, after a failed operation claimed his vision, Art has still not forgotten those sights.

Although he tried his best, Art found it difficult to keep up with most of the work around the house. Without his

eyesight, tasks that were simple became suddenly impossible. Eventually, a friend recommended NeighborLink. What started as a simple household project eventually became two, then three, and quite a few more. Before he knew it, a connection had formed between Art and the volunteers who regularly took time to help him through his needs. Soon enough, the connection the men shared was more than just a passing acquaintance. It had become an unexpected friendship that was irreplaceable and life-changing, lasting even to this day.

AMBER'S STORY

fter a car accident left her paralyzed from the waist down, Amber found herself confined to her home. This left her feeling isolated and alone. Since she couldn't leave her house,

Amber was unable to get involved in her children's outdoor activities. When her daughter started riding a bicycle for the first time, she could only cheer her on by watching videos taken by others.

After enduring a period of seclusion, a ray of hope entered Amber's life when she heard about NeighborLink. She felt it was God's way of saying, "You're going to be free!" After volunteers invested more than 50 hours in the construction of a wheelchair ramp, she can now join her kids when they play outside. NeighborLink provided freedom, a renewed sense of hope, and a strengthened bond with her children.



CLICK HERE TO WATCH AMBER'S FULL STORY



3,059

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE



1,440

PROJECTS WERE COMPLETED



600

HOMEOWNERS SERVED



1,750
INDIVIDUALS VOLUNTEERED

LAST YEAR

NeighborLink received 3,059 requests for assistance from neighbors across all of Fort Wayne. Our staff and volunteers completed 1,440 of those projects for 600 homeowners in 30 zip codes, including neighborhoods in some of the most underserved areas of the city. 1,750 volunteers stepped up to make all of this happen. Each year, we strive to recruit more volunteers and complete even more projects. But we cannot do it alone.

This year, we are excited to grow our services by increasing our involvement with the youth of Fort Wayne, recruiting more church groups, holding block parties in neighborhoods we regularly serve, expanding our space, and reimagining our website to make it even easier for homeowners and volunteers to use.

GET INVOLVED

We would love for you to get involved in the visible work that God is doing just around the corner from where you live. Signing up to volunteer is simple and only takes a few clicks. Will you help? Get involved today!

CURRENT NEEDS

If you're interested in donating to NeighborLink, here are a few of their current needs. You can click on some of the items for a direct link to the product.

HOME DEPOT

- ☐ LATEX PAINT BRUSH SET
- ☐ LATEX 4" BETTER PAINT BRUSH
- ☐ HANDY PAINT PAIL LINERS 1QT

HARBOR FRIEGHT / NORTHERN TOOL

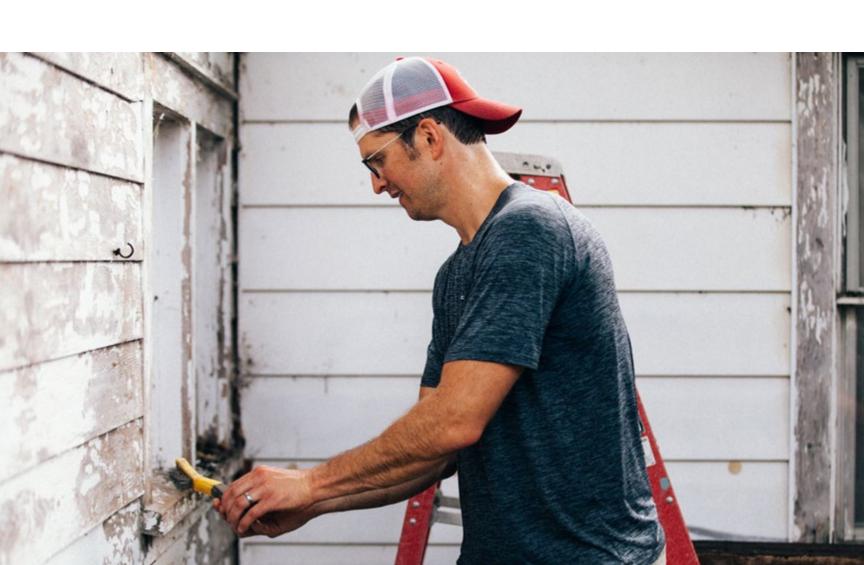
- 3" CHIP BRUSHES
- ☐ LG & XL NITRILE GLOVES 5MIL/7MIL

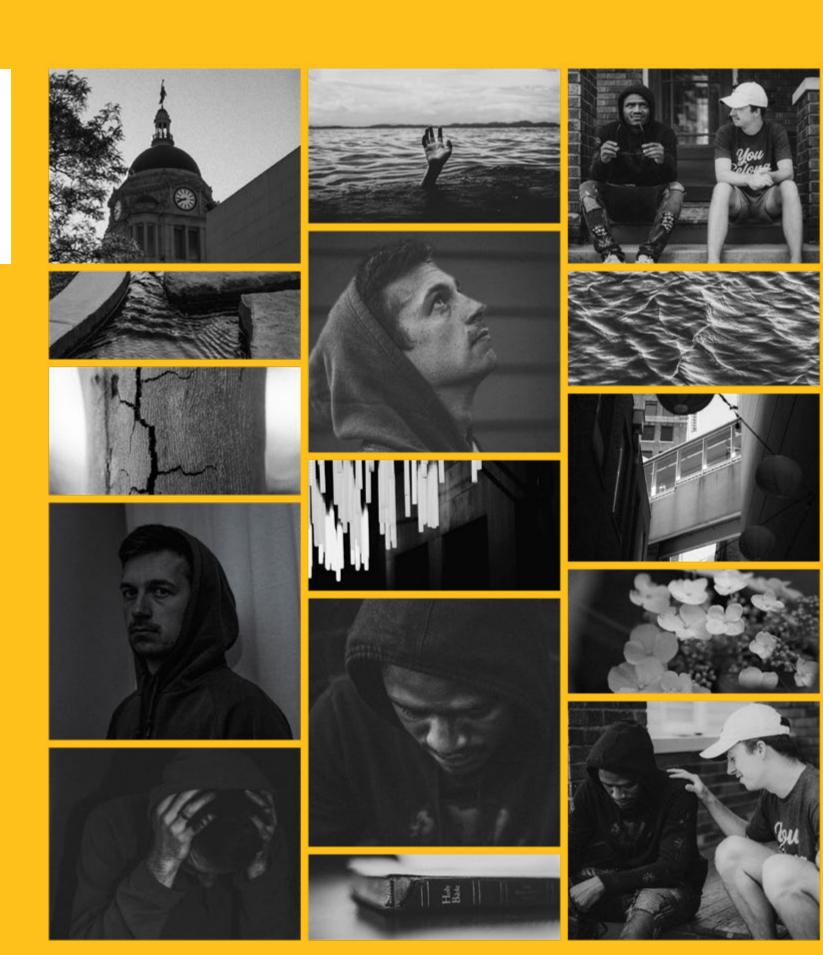
LEE'S OUTDOOR POWER

- 2 STIHL BG 56 HANDHELD BLOWER
- ☐ 1 21" TORO PERSONAL PACE MOWER

DREAM NEED

FULL SIZE 1/2 TON LATE MODEL PICK-UP TRUCK







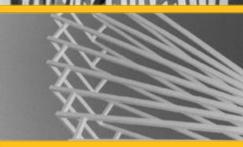








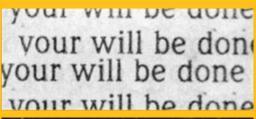










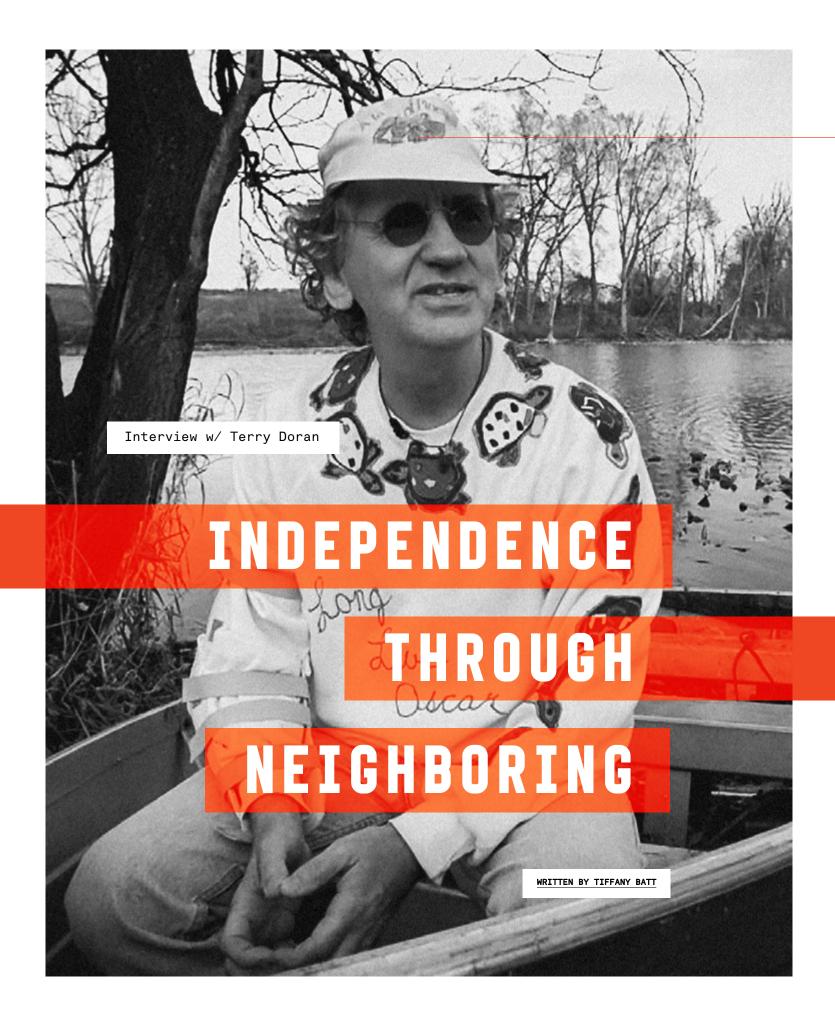












"THIS ORGANIZATION IS THE MAIN REASON I'M ABLE TO LIVE ON MY OWN."



erry Doran is a Fort Wayne native; a former high school English teacher, published author and local newspaper columnist, documentary filmmaker and community program producer.

Doran lives alone and in recent years has developed a balance and dizziness problem which prevents him from doing routine things like mowing the lawn, driving, completing chores, and even walking far without aid. He soon recognized his need for assistance and contacted NeighborLink to get connected with volunteers who could lend a helping hand.

HOW DID YOU GET CONNECTED WITH NEIGHBORLINK?

Two years ago, I did a program at the Allen County Public Library about Miss Virginia, a retired nurse who opened her home to those in need for many years. The focus was how to best honor her legacy. A NeighborLink staff member attended and gave a presentation at the event. I had heard about NeighborLink in the past from friends, but it was this interaction that nudged me to get signed up.

WHAT WERE SOME OF THE TASKS THAT YOU NEEDED HELP WITH?

My home has a step-down design in the foyer and kitchen. Going up and down poses a safety problem for me. The volunteers installed a railing and banister, making it safe to navigate. I've also received help with a few other projects including fixing a ceiling leak, repairing the front storm door, and fixing cabinet drawers. I have a volunteer who cleans my home twice a month as well.

Outside of my home I needed help with general yard work: pulling weeds, raking leaves, and shoveling snow from the driveway. Over a dozen different people have been sent here by NeighborLink to do these projects.

HOW HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH NEIGHBORLINK TRANSFORMED OR SHAPED YOUR IDEA OF "NEIGHBORING?"

Sometimes the state of our society fills me with despair. When I discovered NeighborLink, an organization whose mission is based on empathy, I found renewed hope. Their help has been an inspiration and has encouraged me to do something to give back, in my own way. I've been able to create two free community programs for the city of Fort Wayne: Miss Virginia Day and the annual RiverDrums festival. Both events are designed to champion community bonding, diversity, and empathy within the city.

HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE THE WORD "NEIGHBOR?"

Someone who cares about the struggles of others and transfers that concern into action.

HOW WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THAT ALL OF US BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR IN OUR DAILY LIFE?

If you see a need, offer to help. Some people find it difficult to ask so don't be afraid to take initiative. Even the smallest amount of help can make a huge impact. Carrying groceries, getting the mail, pushing garbage cans to the curb for pickup, providing a ride to the doctor, going to the store – these are all great examples.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE WHO IS CONSIDERING BECOMING A NEIGHBORLINK VOLUNTEER?

Everyone, from staff to volunteers, is friendly. Get to know the person you are helping. I have formed some wonderful friendships.

HOW HAVE YOU BEEN IMPACTED BY NEIGHBORLINK?

I praise NeighborLink to anyone who will listen. This organization is the main reason I'm able to live on my own.



YOUR KINGDOM COME YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

WRITTEN BY CHRYSTAL WENT

THE IDOL OF CONTROL

How far would you go to be in control?

When we stake our contentment on how closely things occur according to our plans, we are in dangerous territory of being lorded over by the idol of control. This idol can be ruthless, micromanaging our lives and filling us with every kind of worry, uncertainty, and anxiety.

A CASE FOR JONAH

Over the next few weeks, we will be meditating on the story of Jonah. We are much like Jonah in that we have been called to engage a city that has yet to fully embrace the good news of salvation. Jonah (whose name means "Dove"), son of Amittai (meaning "My Truth"), was called to bring the word of the Lord to the great city of Nineveh. Much like our city, Nineveh was great in population (Jonah 4:11), great in wealth (Nahum 2:9), great in power (Genesis 10:11), and very wicked (Jonah 1:2).

Given its reputation, it's not hard to see why Jonah may have been intimidated to bring such a condemning word upon its people. Jonah was not only intimidated; he also resisted and fled, foolishly attempting to run from the presence of God. As we process this story over the next few weeks, challenge yourself to reflect on this question: What kept Jonah from engaging the city of Nineveh?

Seeking control outside of God's will makes us captive to the consequences that cause all kinds of calamity in our lives and in the lives of the people around us.

Take a few minutes to read the first chapter of Jonah. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you regarding these verses. Then ask yourself: What does it look like to begin applying YOUR WILL BE DONE to my life right now?

PRAYER FOR SURRENDER

If there was ever a question in our minds if God's control is corrupt or His plans without purpose, we need only to look to the gospel as proof of His perfection. When the idol of control attempts to resurrect itself in our lives, we begin to deconstruct it by surrendering to His ultimate control. When we rehearse the gospel to ourselves, we remind ourselves of Christ's sufficiency in our lives. In humility, we lay down our distrust of the Maker and lean into the perfect plans of our Savior. We dig up roots of rebellion to bear the fruit of a redeemed life in Christ.

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

GALATIANS 2:20 ESV

Take a few minutes to pray the gospel over yourself. Below are a few verses to help you meditate on His completed work and faultless plan.

The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ROMANS 6:23 NIV

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

1 JOHN 4:10 NIV

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

JOHN 3:16 NIV

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-4 NIV

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household.

EPHESIANS 2:19 NIV

Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

REVELATION 5:9 ESV

END YOUR PRAYER TIME WITH THIS

Father God, thank you for surrendering your Son to the world for our salvation. Just as Jesus modeled for us, we now surrender our own will to Yours.

Amen.

"WHEN WE REHEARSE THE
GOSPEL TO OURSELVES,
WE REMIND OURSELVES OF
CHRIST'S SUFFICIENCY IN
OUR LIVES."

CONSIDER US

The captain approached him and said, "What are you doing sound asleep? Get up! Call to your god. Maybe this god will consider us, and we won't perish."

JONAH 1:6 CSB

As you reflect on the verse above, what thoughts come to mind? Picture yourself for a moment in your own boat. Are there people around you who may be crying out for God to have mercy and consider them?

If you are up for the challenge, write this verse on a note card and take it with you on a walk around your neighborhood. As you walk, consider the families and individuals that live in the places surrounding you.



ENGAGE MY CITY 049



COMPASS WATER BOTTLES

MADE BY NALGENE / 32oz

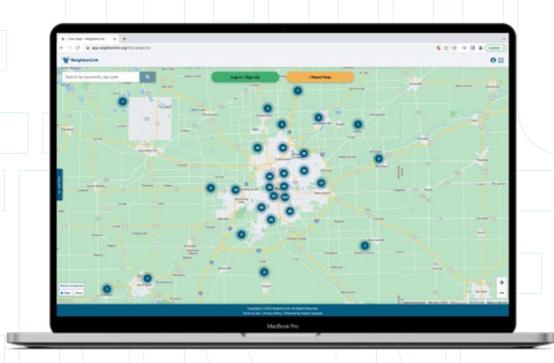


AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE ON SUNDAYS
IN THE PINE HILLS LOBBY



LOOKING TO SERVE YOUR COMMUNITY?

NeighborLink has hundreds of opportunities available for you to meet the needs of those in your surrounding area.



CLICK HERE TO LEARN HOW TO SIGN UP



SECTION 03

54 AFTER PRISON: WHAT'S NEXT?

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF WHAT RE-ENTRY AFTER
PRISON LOOKS LIKE, WHAT CHALLENGES THESE
PEOPLE MAY FACE, AND HOW YOU MAY BE ABLE
TO GET INVOLVED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

58 INTERVIEW WITH INSPIRATION MINISTRIES

INSPIRATION MINISTRIES HELPS BRING HOPE
AND CHANGE TO THE LIVES OF MEN, WOMEN,
AND FAMILIES THAT HAVE EXPERIENCED THE
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM, SUBSTANCE USE,
AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES.

64 ALLEN COUNTY JAIL CHAPLAINCY

ACJC'S GOAL IS TO LEAD INMATES TO THE SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT JESUS DID FOR THEM THROUGH HIS DEATH, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION WITH THE HOPE OF SEEING TRANSFORMED LIVES.

68 MERCY: A SOLUTION BEYOND THE SYSTEM

OUR CAPACITY TO LOVE BROKEN PEOPLE

COMES FROM OUR WILLINGNESS TO HUMBLY

RECOGNIZE AND REMEMBER THAT SAME

BROKENNESS IN OURSELVES.

ENGAGE MY CITY MAGAZINE AUG 2022 / SECTION 03

72 AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

WHEN WE PRAY "AS IT IS IN HEAVEN," WE REMIND OURSELVES OF THE RECONCILING WORK OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS. IT IS THROUGH THIS UNCOMFORTABLE SURRENDER THAT WE ENCOUNTER A GREATER COMFORT—THE PERSON AND HOPE OF OUR SALVATION.

AFTER PRISON

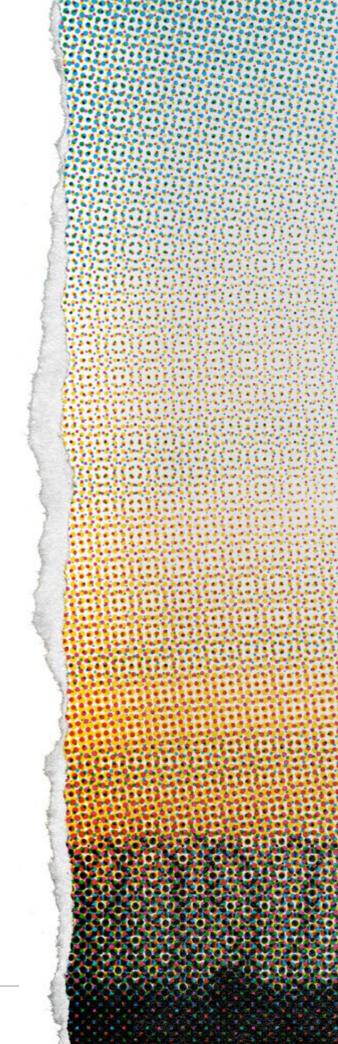
WHAT'S NEXT?

WRITTEN BY JUSTIN SOMMER

When John went to prison in 2002 at the age of 19, George W. Bush was President, American Idol made its television debut, Nokia had the market on cell phones, and the number one song on the Billboard charts was Nickelback's "How You Remind Me." John is now 39 years old, he has finished up his prison sentence, and he is re-entering into a completely different world.

Have you ever considered what that must be like? Is it as simple as picking up where you left off? What unique challenges will John have to face? What preparations has he been given in order to successfully re-engage into a world that has changed so much?

Let's explore a brief overview of what re-entry looks like, what challenges these people may have to face, and how you may be able to get involved to make a difference.



Have you ever considered what that must be like? Is it as simple as picking up where you left off? What unique challenges would someone have to face?

SOME NUMBERS

THE PRISON POPULATION
IS CURRENTLY AROUND 2
MILLION PEOPLE AT ANY
GIVEN TIME.

ON AVERAGE, 600,000
PRISONERS ARE RELEASED
EVER YEAR (THAT'S
1600+ EVERY DAY).

AROUND THREE FOURTHS
OF RELEASED PRISONERS
ARE RE-ARRESTED WITHIN
5 YEARS.

ONLY HALF OF THESE
RELEASED PRISONERS ARE
ABLE TO SECURE STABLE
EMPLOYMENT WITHIN
THEIR FIRST YEAR OUT.

WHAT IS RE-ENTRY?

Re-entry encompasses all the activities and programs designed to help prepare and equip prisoners to return safely to the community where they can fully reintegrate and contribute to society as law-abiding citizens.

According to the Congressional Research Service, there are three phases that are commonly associated with re-entry programs for prisoners:

- Programs that take place during incarceration: these programs are designed to prepare prisoners for their eventual release.
- Programs that take place during a prisoner's release period: these programs are designed to help connect released prisoners with a variety of services that they may require, such as housing, education, medical, and employment, to name a few.
- **3 Long-term programs:** these programs are designed to provide support and supervision so that these former prisoners can permanently reintegrate into their communities.

There is a variety of prisoner re-entry programs. These programs vary from state to state, and they can differ significantly in their range, scope, and methodology. According to research done in the field of re-entry, which has seen a surge in recent years, researchers have suggested that the programs with the greatest success in helping prisoners permanently reintegrate into their communities are the programs that begin during incarceration and extend throughout the release and reintegration process.

CHALLENGES DURING RE-ENTRY

EMPLOYMENT

Have you ever filled out a job application and breezed past the portion that asks about previous arrests, convictions, or felonies? For many of us, we do not give it a second thought, but for those who are trying to re-enter society and secure a stable job so that they can begin to make a living, it becomes a potential barrier for meaningful employment. Many employers will not even give these applicants a chance. The stigma of a criminal record, limited education, and potentially no work history deems them to be unfit for employment. They are flagged and removed from the pile of potential candidates.

Oftentimes, the types of jobs available to these former prisoners are limited. They may be restricted from obtaining certain licenses and certifications

that could lead to meaningful employment. Even if they learned a trade while being incarcerated, they may not be able to secure employment in that field due to legislative policies and restrictions that prevent them from pursuing these opportunities. They are left with entry-level jobs that pay too little, offer little-to-no benefits, and leave them either working multiple jobs just to support themselves or resorting to other means to get by.

As we all know, meaningful employment is extremely important in order for these individuals to get back on their feet. It is not as simple as "just go get a job!" As stated earlier, only half are able to secure stable employment within the first year. That is simply not enough.

HOUSING

What happens to a prisoner upon release who has no social network to fall back on? What if their family members have died, their friends have moved on, and the closest people to them before incarceration are no longer available? Where are they supposed to live? Think about it: you have served your time, the day for your release has arrived, and as you leave the prison you have called "home" for years, where do you even go? Once released, if the former prisoner has no place to go, it is highly likely that they will be homeless, left to live on the streets. If the goal of the re-entry pro-

cess is to help these former prisoners get back on their feet, this is certainly not a great place to start. In fact, it is a contributing factor to recidivism (the tendency of a convicted criminal to reoffend, leading to rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration).

These individuals may or may not have access to money that would allow them to find an apartment or temporary housing. If they do, many housing and apartment policies make it hard or even impossible for them to access a place to live.

Having a place to live upon re-entry is an extremely important variable. You may be thinking in the back of your mind, "I wouldn't want a convicted criminal moving in next door!". That

while in prison but now has lost that care upon release? What if they are dependent on prescriptions? Are they able to find appropriate care? How will they be able to pay for it? What about those suffering from mental health issues?

Continuity of care is critical for those with physical and behavioral health issues. Without systems and processes in place, this can become a serious barrier to successful re-entry and a major health concern.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Oftentimes when we encounter issues or problems that seem so daunting, they overwhelm us to the point of doing nothin place in your community and see if there is an area where you can volunteer. You may already have a skillset or experience that could be highly valuable to these support services.

EMPLOY FORMER PRISONERS

You may own a business or be in a leadership role and have the power and/ or influence to change policies so that former prisoners can work at your business. Be a leader in the charge to make sure these men and women have good job opportunities upon release. Encourage your peers to do the same.

ADVOCATE

You may find out that your communi-

"GREAT CHANGE TAKES PLACE WHEN PEOPLE DO WHAT THEY CAN, AND COLLECTIVELY, THOSE EFFORTS CAN HAVE A HUGE IMPACT."

may be so, but where are they supposed to go? How can we expect them to fully reintegrate if they are not able to secure a place to live?

CLOTHING + TRANSPORTATION

What happens if a former prisoner has no everyday items to go back to upon release? What if the only clothes they have are the clothes on their back? What if they have nothing decent to wear to a job interview? What if they cannot even get to their job interview because they have no means of transportation? It is easy to take for granted the things we have access to every day.

HEALTH

What happens to a prisoner who has medical issues and received proper care

ing. But great change takes place when people do what they can, and collectively, those efforts can have a huge impact.

Here are a few ideas for how you may be able to get involved to make a difference:

EDUCATE YOURSELF

Do some research on what re-entry looks like in your community, as programs vary from state to state. Talk to a former prisoner to hear about their journey and what re-entry was like for them. Find out what policies your employer has as it relates to convicted criminals. Do the same for your housing development or apartment complex.

VOLUNTEER

Find out what re-entry programs are

ty does not have great policies in place. Reach out to your local leaders and officials to advocate for change. Be a voice for those who do not have one.

JESUS + REDEMPTION

Jesus is in the business of taking broken people, just like you and me, and transforming us to become all that He created and intended us to be. Jesus not only calls us to a holy life; He equips us to live it.

As the Church, we have the opportunity to represent and reflect Jesus to the broken people around us. We must be the "salt" and the "light" (Matthew 5:13-16) in this world. When we do that, people change, families change, communities change, and the world changes.

INTERVIEW WITH INSPIRATION MINISTRIES

WRITTEN BY STACY NELSON

Life is full of exhilarating mountain top experiences and deep, often isolating, valley challenges. We've all experienced both in varying ways. Thankfully, we serve a Savior that has walked through both - the highest of highs and the lowest of lows. We worship a God that is near to the brokenhearted and offers second chances with redemptive grace.

Inspiration Ministries follows in the Lord's footsteps by walking alongside those in the valley. They imitate the Father's actions by opening their arms to the prodigals. They speak truth into and over lives that have been deemed unforgivable and damaged by a society quick to ostracize. They help bring hope and change to the lives of men, women, and families that have experienced the criminal justice system, substance use, and mental health issues.





I had the chance to ask Founder Andy Foster about the community impact organization God led him to start and how He is moving within it today.

PHC: WHAT IS INSPIRATION MINISTRIES AND WHAT LED YOU TO START IT?

ANDY: Inspiration Ministries is a community impact organization called to reach the least, the last, and the lost. In our service to the vulnerable community, we have been so blessed to become a champion for recovery housing and services in NE Indiana.

After my own experience of coming out of incarceration, it did not take long to figure out that our communities were not equipped to serve the number of people struggling to find housing, work through substance abuse issues, and receive services for mental health. As the organization grew, we believed that developing comprehensive services to serve people was possible, so we invested our time and money into services to impact people.

PHC: DO YOU MIND SHARING A LITTLE OF YOUR STORY AND WHEN YOU STARTED FOLLOWING CHRIST?

ANDY: In 2007, I came to a

hard realization: substance use and life controlling issues do not discriminate, even for somebody who has talent and a college education. I learned that while in a jail cell wondering what purpose my life really had. It was during that time that a chaplain visited me and shared the redemptive Gospel of Jesus Christ, and my life began to change. God helped me use five years of prison as a training ground to build the vision of Inspiration Ministries.

PHC: WHAT'S SOMETHING YOU WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW ABOUT THE MEN AND WOMEN YOU SERVE?

ANDY: It's important that people start to understand that substance use and mental illness are real issues. It's easy for us to point the finger and say, "Why would you do that," but we are finding more and more that the question we should be asking is "What happened to you?". Past trauma has led to an overwhelming amount of the substance use and mental illness in folks that we serve.

PHC: HOW HAS INSPIRATION MINISTRIES SEEN GOD MOVE RECENTLY?

ANDY: We are in the type of ministry where we see God move every day. We see men and women surrender their



ANDY FOSTER
FOUNDER/CEO
INSPIRATION MINISTRIES

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life to Jesus Christ daily. Along with that, we see God's provision for Inspiration Ministries constantly. Whether that be giving from the Church, grants, vehicles, or new property opportunities, we know that the Lord Jesus Christ has called us to serve the least, the last, and the lost.



"It's easy for us to point the finger and say "why would you do that?" But we are finding more and more that the question we should be asking is "what happened to you?"

PHC: WHAT SETS YOU APART FROM OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES?

ANDY: Not only is Inspiration Ministries faith-based, but we are also evidence-based, trauma-informed, recovery-oriented, and data-driven. All of this has led us to develop one of the most comprehensive recovery programs in the Midwest, and we have been so blessed to see incredible transformation in the lives of the men, women, and families we serve.

PHC: WHAT ARE SOME OBSTACLES THE MINISTRY IS EXPERIENCING CURRENTLY? WHAT NEEDS DOES IT CURRENTLY HAVE?

ANDY: Stigma is still very real and can be a barrier for people who are seeking treatment, but it can also get in the way of sharing a message that says transformation is possible. Some people just don't believe it. We need people that are willing to fight for the Gospel and its redemptive impact on people. As far as operationally, we operate a ton of houses, and we have the same needs as so many families out there. We buy a lot of food, toilet paper, cleaning supplies, gas, vehicles, etc. Sometimes these items are how people feel called to serve and it is such a blessing.

PHC: ARE THERE OTHER WAYS PEOPLE CAN GET INVOLVED IN SUPPORTING THE MINISTRY OR PEOPLE THEY MAY KNOW THAT HAVE COME OUT OF INCARCERATION?

ANDY: We always need volunteers. We need people who can disciple and teach

Bible study, but just as important is the opportunity for people to help with transportation and help with normal operations around the house whether that be supervision, maintenance, or skills training. We serve a ton of people, and it is important that the Church is creative in their idea of impacting others. We need that creative thinking. Getting out of prison or jail is no joke. Most of the men and women that we serve have been cut off from their families and friends and their resources are so limited. It's important that we understand that it takes time to re-enter the community. It's not just about getting



growth and capacity. We have stepped into a ministry where the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. We serve so many people daily and on an annual basis. We need prayers for strength, wisdom, and financial support to continue to build services to impact more individuals.

As you can see, God is clearly transforming lives and generations through the work of Inspiration Ministries. Thank you to Andy and his team of staff and volunteers for reflecting the heart of Jesus to many in our communities. If you would like more information or would like to partner in the work they are doing, please check out inspiration-ministries.org.

a job, a vehicle, or making money. We're talking about the ability for the gospel of Jesus Christ to renew minds, and then as we add things onto this foundation, we see sustainable and long-lasting results.

PHC: WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO KEEP THIS MINISTRY FUNCTIONING AND IMPACTING LIVES?

ANDY: We are an organization that prays hard, works hard, and fully celebrates the work that Jesus can do in people's lives. Collaboration is so key. The transformation that we've seen in the lives of individuals is a game changer

in our communities. It is so important that the Church is a part of nurturing and discipling these men and women. And we need to continue to build up financial partners. We are one of the largest housing providers in the Midwest now, and in order to serve more people, we need partners that understand the impact that we're making for the Gospel.

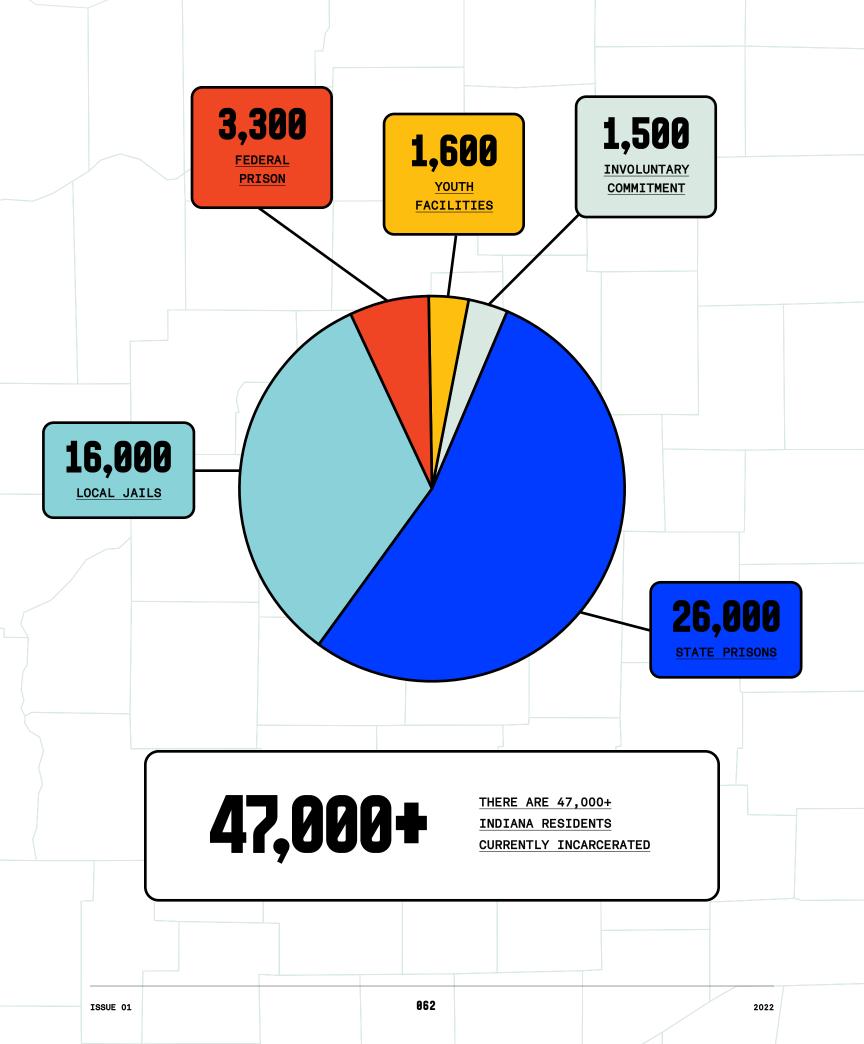
PHC: IF PEOPLE WOULD LIKE TO JOIN IN PRAYING FOR THIS MINISTRY, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE THEM TO SPECIFICALLY INTERCEDE FOR?

ANDY: Please continue to pray for our

Father God,

We thank you and praise you for Inspiration Ministries and the good work you are doing there. You have always been the kind to leave the 99 to rescue the 1; may we also reach out of our folds of comfort and apathy to extend a hand of grace and help to those in our community that are walking through the valleys of trauma. You are a God of second chances; may we be people of the same. Help us reflect your heart of forgiveness and mercy. May we not only lift our voices in prayer to you but also step in physically and financially to meet the needs Inspiration Ministries has to continue transforming lives through the Holy Spirit. Bless them and every life they encounter.

Amen.



53% OF INMATES

IN 2020, INMATES 18-34 ACCOUNTED FOR 53% OF LOCAL JAIL POPULATIONS, AND AGES 55 OR OLDER MAKE UP 7%.

BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS

765 PER 100,000

INDIANA'S INCARCERATION RATE IS 765 PER 100,000
PEOPLE, WHICH INCLUDES PRISONS, JAILS, IMMIGRATION
DETENTION, AND JUVENILE JUSTICE FACILITIES.

PRISON POLICY INITIATIVE

1,774,900

IN THE SPRING OF 2021, THERE WERE AN ESTIMATED

1,193,900 INMATES IN U.S. PRISONS & 647,200

INMATES IN U.S. JAILS (1,774,900 TOTAL).

VERA INSTITUTE

ALLEN COUNTY JAIL CHAPLAINCY

WRITTEN BY
CHAPLAIN TIM DETTMER

ACJC's main objective is to lead each one to the saving knowledge of what Jesus did for them through

His death, burial, and resurrection with the hope of seeing transformed lives.



mission of the Allen County Jail Chaplaincy (ACJC) is to touch each inmate with the love of Jesus Christ in many ways. The main objective is to lead each one to the saving knowledge of what Jesus did for them through His death, burial, and resurrection with the hope of seeing transformed lives. However, that is only part of it. If they are released back into the community with no hope such as having no place to stay or food to eat, they generally return to those same old habits and old friends.

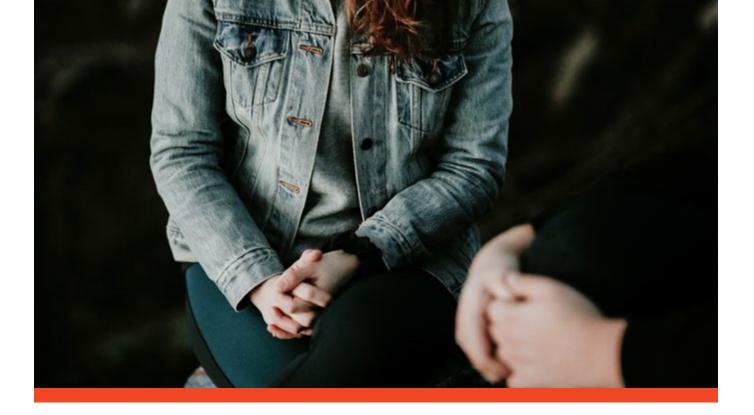
This is where the Chaplaincy's collaboration with support organizations comes into the picture. The Shepherd's House and Choices Treatment Center are both faith-based men's shelters located across from each other. The Shepherd's House mainly focuses on U.S. veterans that are homeless. Choices Treatment Center is an outpatient treatment and recovery facility committed to helping individuals overcome problems

related to gambling, substance abuse, and mental health.

Both organizations collaborate with the Jail Chaplaincy in meeting needs and our Allen County Courts allow inmates to fulfill their sentences at facilities like these instead of remaining in jail. Programs like these are a Godsend in continuing to minister to this lost and dying world.

Another great program which is connected to the Jail Chaplaincy is DAC, the Allen County Drug & Alcohol Consortium. The DAC program assists in providing knowledge, hope, and love for a healthier community. They also assist with a grant to support the Chaplaincy's Substance Abuse class in the jail. The Chaplaincy is finally restarting this program after being suspended for almost 26 months because of the pandemic. Chaplain Deb Schell has been directing this program since the 1990's which includes group counseling for

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those dealing with life controlling substances such as drugs and alcohol. DAC has been providing the resource material and additional training needed in running a program like this at the jail, and with so many inmates incarcerated with these types of strongholds, this program has had tremendous impact.

Upon arrest, each person turns in all their personal property including underwear. If an inmate has money, they can purchase underwear through the jail commissary, but if not, they must submit a request to the Chaplaincy, asking for the needed garments. The chaplaincy submits the request to the commissary fund to see if they are indigent (no money on their account). If they are, the Jail Chaplaincy will provide the needed sizes and items and deliver them to each inmate. St. Vincent de Paul thrift store assists by providing the financial resources to purchase these garments. These items include boxers, t-shirts, socks, bras, underwear, and thermal underwear as it can be cold in the jail. St. Vincent de Paul also helps with much needed clothing for inmates that will be released from the jail. In many cases, inmates were arrested with very little clothing in the summer time, and are released in the middle of winter with only a pair of shorts and a t-shirt. Chaplain Deb Schell picks up the necessary clothing and places them with the inmate's property for when they are released. All of this is free to our chaplaincy program because of important collaborative partners.

The ACJC has a large support system from many of the local women's shelters. Female inmates fill out applications for these shelters with the hope that they will not need to return to the streets or to the environment which caused them to become incarcerated. Some of these organizations include Hope House, YWCA, Victory House, Oxford House Reentry Program, Redemption House, The Rose Home, Charis House, and Genesis Outreach. The biggest challenge is that almost all of these shelters are always full. There have been times that Chaplain Deb Schell or Tim Dettmer have been called by one of the confinement officers asking us to help a recently released inmate find a place to stay because they live outside of the Fort Wayne area, and they have no one to come pick them up at the jail. After many phone calls and help from God, we are able to find temporary housing. The need is great, and we are thankful for the organizations in our community committed to caring for those in our city.

There is always a need for more shelters, rehabilitation facilities, and aftercare housing, but it is the follower of Jesus' job to heed His words: "I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me" (Matthew 25:36 NIV). The Allen County Jail Chaplaincy and all the supporting organizations are helping with the needs of these individuals through God's word, and with His love, they can be transformed through the power of the cross.

NEEDED ITEMS

If you're interested in donating to the Allen County Jail Chaplaincy, here are a few of their regular needs:







UNDERWEAR FOR MEN AND WOMEN

MEN'S UNDERWEAR (BOXERS) WHITE ONLY WOMEN'S UNDERWEAR WHITE ONLY

WHITE SOCKS FOR MEN AND WOMEN

CREWNECK T-SHIRTS WHITE ONLY

SPORTS BRAS (NO WIRE) WHITE ONLY



NON-PRESCRIPTION **READING GLASSES**

NEW READING GLASSES FROM THE DOLLAR STORE (STRENGTH 1.0-3.5)



OTHER (SPECIAL NEEDS)

OFFICE COMPUTERS

OFFICE DESKS

STORAGE CABINETS FOR UNDERWEAR



"THE UNSEEN"
BY CHRYSTAL WENT

Look at the unseen

Your eyes search for endless things

But don't rest on me

Maybe I'm unclean

That must be why you bounce your eyes

Shield what your kids see

NSF F

You're in a hurry

And probably kind if I knew you

But I'm just charity

You see right through me
And I wonder if other people
Share my disposability

MERCY

A SOLUTION BEYOND
THE SYSTEM



"We are all broken by something. We have all hurt someone and have been hurt. We all share the condition of brokenness even if our brokenness is not equivalent."

Our brokenness is both a bond and bondage. It bonds us to humanity and dismantles any idea of a moral pyramid or righteous hierarchy. Our brokenness is also bondage. It causes us to seek solutions to fix the brokenness, but broken people create broken systems. Systems that attempt to protect the weak often exploit the vulnerable. Intentions armed with justice are flawed because they are influenced by the bondage of brokenness. The temptation to rely on the human system to deliver pure justice often becomes an excuse to disengage from the brokenness in our world. But, the solution is not found in a system. Complete reform does not happen through a law. Genuine transformation does not occur by following rules. They might move us closer to freedom, but despite all the good they bring, they still carry humanity's bonding burden of brokenness.

There is a better way. THE way. A Kingdom where the least are the greatest and the broken are redeemed. A solution that is not built on a system but on a person – Jesus. The just One who has justified broken people. The merciful One who has set captives free – a permanent freedom that is not limited by human justice. This Kingdom of restoration and redemption beckons the broken and calls the people of this Kingdom to carry this same beckoning. It requires the involvement and engagement of those who have acknowledged their brokenness and allowed the mercy of the King to re-shape their heart to beat with that same mercy.

"There is a strength, a power even, in understanding brokenness, because embracing our brokenness creates a need and desire for mercy, and perhaps a corresponding need to show mercy." When we replace the question "what do they deserve" with "what do I deserve," we move from the seat of the judge to that of the defendant. Our choices may not have led to jail, prison, or death row, but they do merit death because the only One who is qualified to sit on that seat of judgment has decreed "the wages of sin is death." The verdict is in and it's a resounding "guilty." In that moment, we are not in need of justice; we are in need of mercy and grace. Mercy triumphs over judgment, yet why are we so quick to switch that order and adopt the latter as a personal value disguising it as justice? When we forget that from which we were redeemed, we withhold that which we were given - mercy. Our capacity to love broken people comes from our willingness to humbly recognize and remember that same brokenness in ourselves. We have been redeemed to invite others into that same redemption, back into the restored Kingdom, as it is in heaven.

Humanity IS broken. There is pain and injustice in overwhelming amounts which can lead to the temptation of despair and disengagement, but there is hope for humanity. That hope is Jesus. Someone who restores the broken-hearted, gives liberty to the oppressed, and freedom to those who are bound. Hope exists because it's not limited. It is available to all who believe in the Source of that hope. We have the tremendous opportunity to not only remember the mercy and compassion which offered redemption in exchange for our brokenness, but also realize the pain of our fellow human's brokenness. Not to offer a system or present a policy, but to offer mercy from the Maker and freedom from the Father. Will we answer the sacred call to love - the call to active engagement or will we dismiss the brokenness which compels us to action?

"Our shared vulnerability and imperfection nurtures and sustains our capacity for compassion."

AS II IS AS IT IS

IN HEAVEN

YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE,
ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

WRITTEN BY CHRYSTAL WENT

THE IDOL OF COMFORT

Chasing comfort over calling puts us in a position to miss what God wants to do in and around our city through us. When we worship our comfort, we become unreliable in carrying out the cause of Christ.

We are all prone to be enslaved by something. Often our captivity is tied to our comforts. While comfort and ease might sound like good pursuits, they quickly become idolatry when we chase pleasure and productivity in place of peace with God. We become passive in our responsibilities and overly self-protective when something threatens to cut off what we perceive as free access to a particular dream or desire. We lose sight of what Jesus meant when he taught us to pray, "Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:18-20 (NIV)

When we surrender and are restored back to the Father through salvation in Jesus, we carry the presence and person of heaven with us into all things. We become image bearers, reconcilers, and peacemakers to the world around us. As we shift our focus away from the safety of our own comforts and desires, we begin to truly see the potential for Kingdom in our own family, neighborhood, and city. To become an instrument of peace is to share the message of unity and hope to a city that groans alongside creation, craving restoration in its brokenness (Romans 8:19-21).

GETTING COMFORTABLE WITH THE UNCOMFORTABLE

When we pray "as it is in heaven," we remind ourselves of the reconciling work of Christ on the cross. It is through this uncomfortable surrender that we encounter a greater comfort – the person and hope of our salvation. "As it is in heaven" is an admission to and an acceptance of His glorious grace-filled plan for our lives to build His kingdom and walk in His will.

The application does not stop with "on earth as it is in heaven," but also bleeds into every area of our lives.

IN MY FAMILY
AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

IN MY FRIENDSHIPS
AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

IN MY MARRIAGE
AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

IN MY SINGLENESS
AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

WITH MY CHILDREN
AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

IN MY BARRENNESS
AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

AT MY WORKPLACE
AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

IN MY ALONE TIME
AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

IN MY GRIEVING
AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

IN MY HOPING
AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

IN MY WAITING
AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

IN MY HURTING
AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

IN MY HEALING
AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

WHEREVER I GO AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

<u>WHATEVER I CHOOSE</u> AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

WHATEVER I SET MY MIND TO AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

FROM SURRENDER TO SALVATION

Read the second and third chapters of Jonah.

As you reflect on these two chapters, try to imagine what it would have been like to be Jonah. Then imagine yourself from the perspective of being the king of Nineveh. What was the outcome of each of their stories of surrender?

THE FIRST DAY

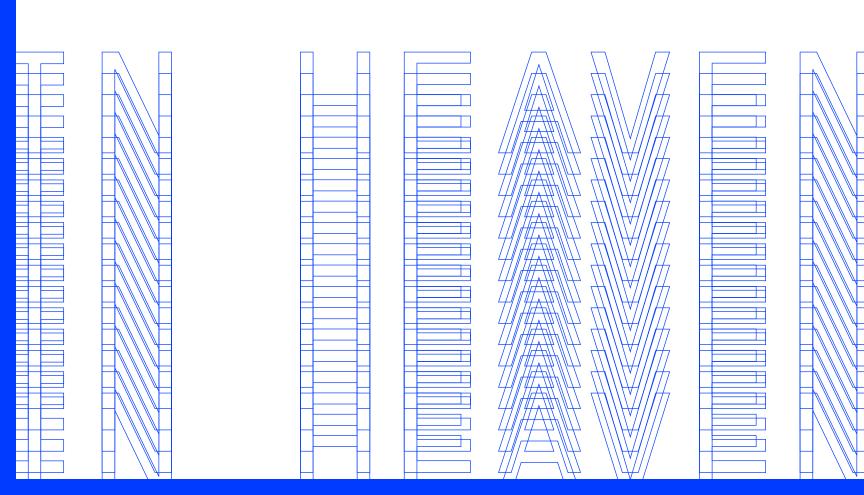
Jonah set out on the first day of his walk in the city and proclaimed, "In forty days Nineveh will be demolished!" Then the people of Nineveh believed God... from the greatest of them to the least.

JONAH 3:4-5 (CSB)

There's something striking about this part of Jonah's story. We are told in Jonah 3:3 that Nineveh was so large it would take three days to walk its distance. The entire city of Nineveh heard the word of God and believed....on the very first day.

Jonah's obedience resulted in a radical move of God. As uncomfortable as Jonah was to follow God's call to engage the city of Ninevah, God still used him. It only took one day of being stripped of all comfort and pride, and 120,000 people were saved. Imagine how much more enjoyable that testimony could have been had Jonah not been resistant to the Lord's leading.

How would Jonah's story have looked different if he had surrendered his discomfort and embraced God's will with an attitude of "as it is in heaven?"



PRAYER FOR PEACE

This prayer was originally attributed to Saint Francis in the early 1900s. Though he did not write it, he was known for how he embodied peace to those around him. As you read this prayer, consider how you can practice not only speaking the words, but living your life as a peacemaker.

LORD, MAKE ME AN INSTRUMENT OF YOUR PEACE:
WHERE THERE IS HATRED, LET ME SOW LOVE;

WHERE THERE IS INJURY, PARDON;

WHERE THERE IS DOUBT, FAITH;

WHERE THERE IS DESPAIR, HOPE;

WHERE THERE IS DARKNESS, LIGHT;

WHERE THERE IS SADNESS, JOY.

O DIVINE MASTER, GRANT THAT I MAY NOT SO MUCH SEEK

TO BE CONSOLED AS TO CONSOLE,

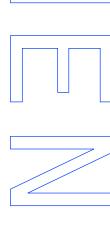
TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS TO UNDERSTAND,

TO BE LOVED AS TO LOVE.

FOR IT IS IN GIVING THAT WE RECEIVE,

IT IS IN PARDONING THAT WE ARE PARDONED,

AND IT IS IN DYING THAT WE ARE BORN TO ETERNAL LIFE.



075



78 A NETWORK OF SUPPORT

NEW MERCIES MINISTRIES PROVIDES SUPPORTIVE
CONNECTIONS, SAFE HOUSING, AND RESTORATIVE
SERVICES FOR WOMEN AND FAMILIES,
EMPOWERING THEM TO GAIN STABILITY AND
ULTIMATELY LIVE INDEPENDENTLY.

80 ISOLATION VS. COMMUNITY

GOD CREATED US FOR COMMUNITY, AND BY HIS DESIGN, COMMUNITY IS A VESSEL THROUGH WHICH WE ARE STRENGTHENED AND GROWN, ESPECIALLY IN SEASONS OF CRISIS.

84 INTERVIEW W/ THE BICKELS

WE SAT DOWN WITH THE BICKELS TO ASK THEM A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT NEW MERCIES AND HOW THEY ARE CONNECTED TO THEIR MISSION.

PROVIDING HOPE AND EMPOWERING FAMILLIES

A TRUE STORY ABOUT A YOUNG GIRL NAMED EMMA WHO ALLOWED THE LORD TO WORK IN HER LIFE PHYSICALLY, EMOTIONALLY, MENTALLY, AND SPIRITUALLY, WITH THE HELP OF NEW MERCIES MINISTRIES.

ENGAGE MY CITY MAGAZINE AUG 2022 / SECTION 04

90 NEIGHBOR

AS WE GROW IN LOVE, MAY WE LEARN TO SEE THROUGH THE EYES OF OUR NEIGHBORS, AND AS WE GROW IN COMPASSION, MAY WE BE MOVED TO ACTION.

94 LORD, HAVE MERCY

"KYRIE, ELEISON" IS A SHORT PRAYER THAT

IS IMPORTANT IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP. IT IS
A PRAYER FROM THE HEART ABOUT HUMAN NEED.

GOD OWES US NOTHING. EVERYTHING HE GIVES

COMES FROM HIS MERCY.



New Mercies Ministries seeks to provide early intervention, allowing families to receive help before abuse or neglect occurs, in an effort to keep children safe and families together.



hildren are a precious gift from the Lord. Unfortunately, the brokenness of humanity too often puts children in a vulnerable position, one that they cannot change on their own. There are various organizations that provide opportunities to step in and meet a child, and

sometimes their families, where they are with the possibility of changing their life, on earth and for eternity.

Two of these organizations are New Mercies Ministries and foster care. Both organizations share the common goal to provide stability and safety for children who are in vulnerable positions. New Mercies Ministries is a gospel-centered organization that has the goal of "providing supportive connections, safe housing, and restorative services for women and families, empowering them to gain stability and ultimately live independently."

New Mercies Ministries seeks to provide early intervention, allowing families to receive help before abuse or neglect occurs, in an effort to keep children safe and families together. This approach is a non-coercive alternative to state child welfare and loss of custody. This is done by volunteer host families who are recruited through the Church. Host families provide a safe and loving home where children can stay while their parents need assistance in caring for their children. Host families are provided with family coaches who come alongside parents during hosting and give support and mentorship. Through the dedication of the host families, New Mercies Ministries helps prevent child abuse and neglect, stabilizes families, and shares the light and hope of Christ to vulnerable families in our community.

When intervention does not happen soon enough, children may be placed in the foster care system. Foster

care seeks to "provide a safe, nurturing, stable and temporary environment for children who can no longer remain in their own homes due to the risk of abuse or neglect." Foster care placement usually occurs until the child(ren) can be reunified with their family or another permanent placement is established. Permanency for a child means having a safe, stable, and secure home and family. It also means experiencing love, unconditional commitment, and lifelong support in the context of reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship.

Permanency may occur when children are placed with members of their extended family in guardianship or adoption. Placement for children in foster care is by licensed or unlicensed relatives or licensed non-relative foster parents.

To become a non-relative foster parent, you must become licensed by meeting a variety of requirements set by the Department of Child Services. There are many resources available to foster parents including a mobile app, online panels, trainings, and more. There are several distinct differences between New Mercies Ministries and foster care and although it is not prescriptive, oftentimes placements with New Mercies Ministries will be shorter than those with foster care. Additionally, there is the opportunity to foster-to-adopt within the foster care system.

As adults, when we think of caring for our neighbors, we likely gravitate to adults who are impoverished, disabled, elderly, or have communicated that they could use a helping hand. But have you thought about the children that need a helping hand? Those who may not be able to speak up for themselves? Have you considered the children in your community to be your neighbor? Have you contemplated what role you might play in caring for your young neighbor?

ISOLATION VS. COMMUNITY

- IN CRISIS

WRITTEN BY COLE WENT





God desires for us to live in community. We see this clearly in Genesis 2:18, where He says, "it is not good for man to be alone." We see this desire exemplified in the life of Jesus as He walked with His disciples in community, and we see the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit practice community within the Trinity. Perhaps one of the greatest purposes for community is made clear when we go through seasons of crisis. When in a crisis, a healthy community can shine light into our darkest moments. Because we have an enemy that prowls around like a roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8) aiming to deceive (John 8:44), steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10), it is safe to say that a healthy community is the last thing Satan wants for us during times of crisis. We see this in the book of Job. I do not think it is a coincidence that one of Satan's first attacks is to eliminate those closest to Job, leaving him isolated.



When we are in moments of crisis and find ourselves isolated from community, we bear the total weight of the situation ourselves. This weight can become too much even for the most seasoned, faith-filled Christian. In isolation, we become vulnerable to Satan's deception, make rash, unwise decisions, and find it challenging to act with integrity. I moved to Fort Wayne six years ago amid a crisis. I had just

in times of crisis. Isolation in crisis produces weakness, uncertainty, and distrust. I enjoy working out, and one of my favorite exercises is the bench press. It is one of those exercises that people universally use to measure their strength. Anyone who has spent significant time in or around a gym has likely been asked the question, "How much can you bench?". With bench pressing, it is difficult to know

11, weeping with them and ultimately pointing them back to Himself. When we have friends who know and love Jesus surrounding us during a crisis, we are encouraged to draw near to the Lord for strength, and our confidence in Him is sustained by the truth spoken to us and over us. Through a faithful friend's words, we are reminded of who we are and Whose we are. Six years ago, Jesus, by His grace, led me to Pine Hills

"Community helps bear the weight of a crisis, speaks life and truth over you in the middle of a crisis, and adds accountability to ensure you are acting with integrity through a crisis."

discovered that my wife, who was supposed to have moved with me, was having an affair and no longer wanted to be my wife. I was in a new place and did not know anyone. I was isolated. My mind was filled with lies and accusations about how I had failed as a husband. My trust in Jesus wavered. The joy and hope that were once so vibrant and natural had faded. I was becoming a victim of our enemy's trap. The truths I once knew so well and clung to so closely were beginning to slip away.

This may sound simple, but isolation during seasons of crisis causes us to depend on our own ability and strength. I do not want to dismiss the strength we get from the Holy Spirit to work in us and through us in times of crisis, but the Holy Spirit's strength is not an excuse to pursue isolation

the maximum weight you can lift. The repercussions of attempting to lift more than you are able could lead to severe injury or even death! However, this danger can be significantly mitigated with the help of a spotter to stand over you and help support the weight if you cannot lift it completely. A good spotter also coaches you through the lift with words of encouragement and instruction. In the same way, a community can help mitigate some of the dangers that a crisis brings. Community helps bear the weight of a crisis, speaks life and truth over you in the middle of a crisis, and adds accountability to ensure you are acting with integrity through a crisis.

Paul instructs the Galatians to bear one another's burdens in Galatians 6:2. We see Jesus bear the burden of Lazarus death with Mary and Martha in John

Church and gave me a community of believers that reminded me that even though my wife had rejected me, I was accepted by God and always would be because of Jesus. They reminded me that my identity was not found in being a divorcee but in being a child of God. I was redeemed. In isolation, I was forced to bear the whole weight of my crisis and the full assault of the enemy's lies, but in community, the weight of my burden was shared, and my community fought with me against the enemy's lies. In isolation, I was in a state of vulnerability and weakness, but in community, I was strong. Ecclesiastes 4:12 sums up this thought concisely:

"Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."



It is important to note that not all community is created equal. While a healthy community of people who love Jesus can breathe life into a seemingly dark and desperate situation, a community of selfish and prideful people can snuff out what little light might be remaining. We see this in the book of Job, where instead of speaking life over Job and offering him support, his friends try to find fault in Job, insisting his difficult circumstances were a result of his own sin. Perhaps one of the best things we can do for our future crisis traversing selves is to take inventory of those we surround ourselves with in the present.

In John 16:33, Jesus said, "You will have suffering in this world." Jesus' words in this verse are a promise, a statement. Jesus makes the question of whether or not we will face crises in our lives a foregone conclusion. We WILL have suffering. In this life, crisis abounds - unexpected deaths, layoffs, mass shootings, divorces, pandemics, pick your flavor. Praise the Lord for giving us the option of not walking through those seasons of crisis alone. By His grace, He created us for community, and by His design, community is a vessel through which we are strengthened and grown, especially in seasons of crisis. Community dulls the impact of crisis, making it more bearable, and then helps cultivate healing from the impact. Isolation provides no protection from the impact of crisis and leaves the wounds deep and untreated. For community to be effective, we must first practice vulnerability and let good community into our dark seasons. I pray that you fight the temptation to go it alone during difficult seasons and instead find the strength to be vulnerable and seek out community.



Colton and Carly Bickel have been attending Pine Hills Church for a combined 21 years - 9 for Colton and 12 for Carly. For the past couple of years, they have been involved with New Mercies Ministries and we asked them to share about their experience.

PHC: TALK TO ME ABOUT NEW MERCIES MINISTRIES. WHAT DO THEY DO AND HOW DO YOU SERVE?

CARLY: New Mercies Ministries is an organization that serves families in the community who need a little bit of extra support. We are a host family which means we bring kids into our home that are a part of families who need that extra support. Their length of stay with us is determined by the length of the hosting. It could be a couple days, a week, or a month.

PHC: WHY DO YOU SERVE WITH NEW MERCIES? WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO BE INVOLVED?

colton: If you know my wife, you know she loves kids. One of the things that was important for us as a family was loving on kids and finding ways to help those who may be in need. In that process of searching, we found New Mercies Ministries and thought that was a great opportunity for us to help kids who may need a safe space. It's been a great experience for us so far. We've really enjoyed it. We have had three hostings, and they each have gone really well. It's something we very much value and enjoy doing.

PHC: HOW HAS SERVING WITH NEW MERCIES MINISTRIES IMPACTED YOU? HOW ARE YOU DIFFERENT BECAUSE OF IT?

CARLY: My eyes have been opened to a different culture along with different brokenness and hurt in the world. It has widened my perspective and changed my view of God's love. I have seen the way He truly loves each and every one and how He is a Father to everyone as well.

COLTON: It's given me the opportunity to learn more patience throughout the process of not only dealing with the children, but also the families and the entire situation. I have a deeper understanding of Christ's love for me and how that impacts me as I am a part of these kids' lives.

PHC: WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO OTHERS WHO MIGHT BE CONSIDERING SERVING?

CARLY: Have a conversation. We are a part of New Mercies and there are a bunch of other couples at PHC that are a part of New Mercies. The staff at New Mercies are fantastic. There are so many different roles to serve with New Mercies. You don't have to actually host kids. You can be a

transportation volunteer who takes kids from daycare to the host family. You can drop off supplies or meals. You can be a support line volunteer where you are on the phone with the families who need extra support. There are so many different opportunities.

PHC: ANY STORIES OF IMPACT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE?

COLTON: Recently, I got to attend a Donuts for Dad event with our little guy which was really fun and something that he may not have been able to experience like the other kids in his class. I was able to step in and do that and it was an awesome experience.

CARLY: When we pull into the church parking lot, our little guy knows the building. He enjoys his class and knows he gets to have fun at church. He knows what church is, and I think that's really special. Since we have had him, we have sung "How Great is Our God" to him before bed. He is at the age now where he will sing it with us. He is saving that in his heart and mind. When he is not with us, he can sing it to his mom or to his brothers and sisters, and, hopefully, those little things can make a lasting impact on him and his heart.

PROVIDING HOPE

CMPOWERING FAMILIES

WRITTEN BY
NEW MERCIES MINISTRIES



NEW MERCIES MINISTRIES IS A GOSPEL-CENTERED ORGANIZATION THAT HAS THE GOAL OF PROVIDING SUPPORTIVE CONNECTIONS, SAFE HOUSING, AND RESTORATIVE SERVICES FOR WOMEN AND FAMILIES, EMPOWERING THEM TO GAIN STABILITY AND ULTIMATELY LIVE INDEPENDENTLY.

IN

February of 2022, a Support Line Volunteer with New Mercies received a call from

Emma who had just completed the program at A Mother's Hope. She was clean from her addiction and had secured a job, an apartment, and daycare for her child, yet she was still struggling with weekend care. Emma was doing all the right things and was working to turn her life around from the poor choices she had made in the past. Her problem was not a poor work ethic or lack of love, it was that she was trying to create a better life for herself and her child all on her own.

Emma had to work weekends to provide for her baby. She had no family or re-

liable friends in this new city and was not connected with a church or social group, but she did have a therapist from A Mother's Hope who helped her make the call to New Mercies. Often, New Mercies and A Mother's Hope work together to serve a mom in need. A New Mercies Host Family and Family Coach were quickly found, and something beautiful was born. Through the length of the hosting, Emma formed deep friendships with her Host Family and Family Coach. Commonly, there would be texting back and forth between Emma and her Host Family, as friends do with each other. The Family Coach even once helped Emma with her laundry so that she could have more quality time with her baby. Slowly, Emma was making strides in the right direction, and then her past caught up to her.

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Emma made an unwise decision many years prior, and she had to serve time on house arrest to make amends. All the work she did to secure housing and her job was jeopardized. All the time and effort that she put into finding care for her baby was now at risk. She felt at a loss, but then remembered that she had people she could reach out to for help. Emma leaned on her therapist, her Family Coach, and her Host Family. She was encouraged and surrounded by people of faith. During this struggle, Emma shared vulnerably that she wanted to know God better. She had grown up going to church and wanted to start again. She and her Host Family were able to have good, deep conversations

that helped her grow in her relationship with God. The Family Coach began to pray more with Emma during her goals meeting. Emma would be so excited to share with her Coach and Host Family all that God was teaching her through music, her devotional time, and online preaching. Emma used her time on house arrest to draw closer to God.

As the hosting was starting to end, Emma became nervous. She still needed help. She was still a single mom in need of a village to surround her. Her Host Family reminded her that there are no expiration dates on friendships. They spoke words of encouragement and helped Emma to remember how far she had come and how well she had weath-

ered the crises of the past few months. She was able to stabilize her situation enough to continue to parent her child further. The Family Coach called Emma one day asking if she wanted to continue a spiritual relationship through Rooted Together, the mentoring program of New Mercies. Emma quickly said "yes" with excitement. During the formation of relationships with New Mercies, Emma allowed the Lord to work in her life physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. She has been and continues to be on a journey with the Lord and is delighted with all the people He continues to bring into her life.

NEW MERCIES MINISTRIES

NEEDED ITEMS

If you're interested in donating to New Mercies Ministries, here are a few of their regular needs:



ACTION BIBLES



\$25 INCREMENT GIFT CARDS
FOR GROCERIES OR GAS



JESUS STORYBOOK BIBLES

NEIGHBOR

BY THE BAILEYS

We originally wrote this song in the middle of the Syrian crisis a few years ago. After years of bombings, missile strikes, and chemical attacks, the world watched as millions of people became displaced, homeless, and hopeless. As the mixed responses to refugees, immigration and border control grew tense, we often thought of Jesus' teaching to "love your neighbor as yourself."

After high school, I spent a few years working with first generation refugees and immigrants from Sudan, Congo, Burma, and Bosnia. As I spent time with them, I heard some of the most heart-breaking stories of war, famine, and genocide, and I witnessed first-hand some of the painful effects of displacement as they navigated the reality of starting over. As I got to know these precious people, it became more and more evident that these were the kind of neighbors Jesus was talking about. One Karen (Burmese) family literally lived down the street from me.

This song was a challenge for us to write, as we were convicted of our own indifference, reminded of our shared humanity and our high calling towards justice and mercy. In light of our own brokenness and hopelessness, and the mercy and kindness that God has shown us in Christ, it is our desire to "go and do likewise." As we grow in love, may we learn to see through the eyes of our neighbors, and as we grow in compassion, may we be moved to action. Whether we go across the world or across the street, may we find the courage to love like He loves. To give like He gives. No matter what it takes.





VERSE 01

I WAS A REFUGEE

I NEEDED RESCUING

I WAS RUNNING AND AFRAID

YOU BROUGHT ME IN AND MADE ME SAFE

YOU WELCOMED ME

VERSE 02

I WAS AN ORPHAN BOY

I WAS A SILENT VOICE

I WAS SCARED AND ALL ALONE

YOU TOOK ME IN AND CALLED ME HOME

YOU CARED FOR ME

CHORUS

I WANT TO LOVE LIKE YOU LOVED
I WANT TO GIVE LIKE YOU GIVE
I DON'T WANT TO BE AFRAID
TO LIVE LIKE YOU LIVED

HELP ME TO LOVE LIKE YOU LOVED HELP ME TO GIVE LIKE YOU GIVE NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES

VERSE 03

I WAS YOUR ENEMY
FIGHTING FOR MY BELIEFS
YOU WERE REACHING THROUGH THE DARK
SEEING THROUGH MY BITTER HEART
YOU WERE A FRIEND TO ME

BRIDGE

I WANT TO HAVE THIS HEART IN ME
THAT SEES THE EYES OF THOSE IN NEED
TO LOVE AND SERVE THE LEAST OF THESE
I WANT TO LIVE LIKE YOU

I WANT TO BE THE HANDS AND FEET
THAT GO TO ALL WHO NEED PEACE
ACROSS THE WORLD, ACROSS THE STREET
I WANT TO LIVE LIKE YOU

CLICK HERE TO LISTEN

FEEDING A FAMILY OF 10

PIZZA PASTA CASSEROLE



TOTAL TIME= PREP: 20 MIN / BAKE: 25 MIN



MAKES: 2 CASSEROLES (10 SERVINGS EACH)

INGREDIENTS

- 2 POUNDS GROUND BEEF
- 1 LARGE ONION, CHOPPED
- 3-1/2 CUPS SPAGHETTI SAUCE
- 1 PACKAGE (16 OZ) SPIRAL
 OR CAVATAPPI PASTA, COOKED
 AND DRAINED
- 4 CUPS SHREDDED PART-SKIM MOZZARELLA CHEESE
- 8 OUNCES SLICED PEPPERONI

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 350°. In a large skillet, cook beef and onion over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain. Stir in spaghetti sauce and pasta.
- 2. Transfer to 2 greased 13x9-in. baking dishes. Sprinkle with cheese. Arrange pepperoni over the top.
- 3. Bake, uncovered, 25-30 minutes or until heated through.

Instructions to include for reheating a pre-cooked casserole: Cook the dish at 350° for 25-30 minutes if thawed in the fridge, adding 20 minutes or more if transferred directly from the freezer to the oven. Leave foil lid in place but fold back a corner so the steam does not get trapped under the lid. Rotate the dish halfway through the cooking time to allow for an even reheat.



LORD, HAVE MERCY LORD, HAVE MERCY LORD, HAVE MERCY LORD, HAVE MERCY

KYRIE, ELEISON

(KI-ree-ay, ay-LAY-ee-zonn)

"Lord, have mercy" is a short prayer that is important in Christian worship. It is a prayer from the heart about human need. God owes us nothing. Everything He gives comes from His mercy.

Before we begin interacting with this week's prayer content, let's take a moment to settle our hearts and quiet our minds in humble surrender.

LORD, HAVE MERCY. CHRIST, HAVE MERCY. LORD, HAVE MERCY.

As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. There were two blind men sitting by the road.

When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!"

The crowd demanded that they keep quiet, but they cried out all the more,

"Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!"

Jesus stopped, called them, and said, "What do you want me to do for you?"

"Lord," they said to him, "open our eyes."

Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they could see, and they followed him.

MATTHEW 20:29-34 CSB

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OUR NINEVEH

Take a few minutes to read chapter 4 of Jonah.

When reading the story of Jonah, we might ask, "What kept him from embracing God's call and fully engaging the city of Ninevah?" Was it perhaps the idolatry of desiring power, approval, control, or comfort?

Do similar desires keep us from seeing the people in our own city who need God's mercy? What keeps us from recognizing our own brokenness and the calamities we cause in our disobedience to God's calling? What keeps us from engaging our city throughout the entire year?

"Holy Spirit, help me see where there is Nineveh in me."

BROOKE LIGERTWOOD, "NINEVEH"

TEAR DOWN THE IDOLS

For although we live in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh, since the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds. We demolish arguments and every proud thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ.

2 CORINTHIANS 10:3-5 (CSB)

Over the past few weeks, we have explored and exposed some level of idolatry in our lives. The idols of power, approval, control, and comfort may seem impossible to crush, but by God's mercy, as Scripture confirms, we can smash strongholds to pieces. Which of the four root idols have you identified in your own life?

This is what the Lord, the King of Israel and its Redeemer, the Lord of Armies, says: I am the first and I am the last. There is no God but me.

ISAIAH 44:6 (CSB)

PRAYING REPENTANCE

Jesus, I acknowledge that there is no God but You. I repent of worshiping idols at the cost of my intimacy with You. I declare my need for You alone. Where I have stepped out of alignment with Your authority, I now submit and reaffirm my dependence on You. Where I have pursued power and pleasure outside of Your will, I now yield to Your plan and purpose for my life. Where I have squandered wealth and influence for the approval of others in the pursuit of my own comfort, I now surrender to Your call. Tear down the idols that I have sacrificed to on the high places of my heart. Crush my counterfeits. I dedicate myself to You, Lord God, as a temple for Your Holy Spirit. Come take up residence on the altar of my heart. Fill me and seal the work You have done today, in Jesus' name.

Amen.

SCRIPTURES TO SMASH THE STRONGHOLDS

NEHEMIAH 9:6

1 CORINTHIANS 8:6

1 CHRONICLES 29:11

COLOSSIANS 1:15-20

PSALM 145

EXODUS 20:4-6

ACTS 17:24-28

ISAIAH 42:8

PSALM 40:5

ISAIAH 55:6-9

PSALM 113

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EDITOR

TIFFANY BATT

<u>DESIGNER</u>

NICK VINCENT

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

TIFFANY GARDNER RICK LESSING
HOLLIE BOYLES ROBERT JOHNSON
MADDI BAGAN TIFFANY BATT
CHRYSTAL WENT JUSTIN SOMMER
COLE WENT SERAH O'DEENS

STACY NELSON
CHAPLAIN TIM DETTMER
NEW MERCIES MINISTRIES
LANDON + KELLIE BAILEY

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

THE RESCUE MISSION
KELSI SMURR
CECIL JONES
ENGAGE MY CITY TEAM

PHOTOGRAPHERS

SHANNON MILLER
SERAH O'DEENS
SARAFINA BURTON
NICK VINCENT

ARTICLE SOURCES

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