

MEMPHIS UNION MISSION NEWS

What God is Doing Through You

Volume 16, Number 5 | Holiday Issue 2010

A DESIRE TO CHANGE

“God Put Me Where I Needed to Be”

Losing a child ... it's agony. Cassandra faced such a nightmarish prospect not once, but twice.

Her childhood story was a sad spiral: rebellion, drugs, married young – into an abusive relationship.

“I hated myself,” Cassandra says.

She was hooked on meth when her first baby arrived. The child had health problems – and died. Devastated, Cassandra turned even more heavily to drugs.

Then her marriage imploded.

Cassandra's mother invited her to church. Weeping, she gratefully received Christ. Soon she moved in with mom and landed work. Life, it seemed, was stabilizing.



But her past kept beckoning. “I started drifting,” she recalls. “I was dabbling with meth. I would pray ... I had a desire to change, but didn't know how.”

Another marriage came and went. And then – pregnant again, and on probation for drugs – Cassandra failed a drug test.

Confronted with her drug addiction, and terrified that another baby would die, she cried out to Jesus “and asked Him to help me. I said that if He wanted this child to live, He would have to get me out of this situation.”

Two hours later, policemen arrived.

“That was the answer to my prayer!” Cassandra says. “I actually felt peace.”

Her probation officer recommended Moriah House at Memphis Union Mission.

“God's love just flowed though here,” Cassandra says. “God put me where I needed to be. I learned what true happiness is with him.”

Here at Moriah House, Cassandra gave birth to Zoey.

“She's my miracle baby,” Cassandra says. “Zoey means ‘life,’ and God gave her to me to start a new life.” And through the staff and volunteers at Moriah House, Cassandra adds, she learned “to be a mother, a sister, and a daughter.”

By the time you read these words, she will have graduated from our program – and entered community college!

Thank you for helping to write a happy ending to Cassandra's story!



Inside

A Personal Word.....2

“Time to Change”.....3

Christmas Care Packages Needed.....4

A PERSONAL WORD

From the
President & CEO



Dear Friend of the Needy,

A crispness in the air.
Familiar old tunes in stores.
You might even hear the
ching-a-ling of sleigh bells.
There's something about
Christmas. You just can't
keep from feeling warm and
wonderful about it.

But many folks in the
Memphis area have a different
"Christmas feeling." Their lives
"went bad" this year, or got
worse. They made mistakes.
Or trouble just came. A
job evaporated. Someone
walked away. Health trouble.
Whatever ... they're hurting.

So you and I, people
so blessed, we celebrate
Christmas! You have the
privilege of reaching out ...
extending a hand ... offering
shelter, a meal, an arm around
the shoulder, a kind word.
Hope.

The gift you give to
Memphis Union Mission
may be the most valuable gift
you'll give this Christmas. The
New Year will be different
somehow ... better, brighter ...
because of you.

Thank you ... and may your
Christmas be the best ever!

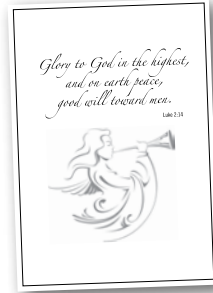
D. Scott Bjork
President & CEO

2

Honor Someone Special This Christmas!

Are you trying to find a Christmas gift for someone who has everything? Or perhaps you're simply looking for a meaningful way to honor someone special?

Either way, Memphis Union Mission Christmas cards are a great solution! You can give a special gift in honor of family, friends, clients or employees.



Each person on your list will receive a handwritten, personalized card that lets them know that you gave a Christmas gift to help homeless Memphians in their honor.

We'll even address and mail the cards for you (unless you indicate otherwise).

Here's all you have to do:

- Check the "Send my Christmas cards" box on the enclosed reply slip.
- Include a list of names and addresses of people you wish to honor in the reply envelope.
- Include a donation of \$10 per card for each name on your list. (Please call us about larger orders.)

To ensure that your cards are delivered before Christmas, we must receive your order by Friday, December 17.

For more information, please call Steve Carpenter at **(901) 526-8403**.

Friends of the Friendless

It takes hundreds of hands and thousands of dollars to feed, shelter and minister to the many people who come to Memphis Union Mission for help.

Much of our support tends to be seasonal. That's why our Friends of the Friendless members are such an important part of this ministry. Each Friends of the Friendless member has pledged to send us a monthly gift, or to give by credit card or EFT.

It is a tremendous blessing knowing we can count on these gifts to

provide food, shelter and care – month in and month out.

When you become a member of this group of friends, your monthly gift becomes a constant lifeline of support to those we serve. Plus, you'll receive updates on what's happening here at the Mission, along with newsletters and special invitations to Mission luncheons and meetings.

If you're interested in becoming a Friend of the Friendless, contact Steve Carpenter at **(901) 526-8403**.

HOW MANY?

What If There Was Only One?

What if only one person needed us this Christmas?

We'd still be here. We would open our doors, sweep the floors ... make the beds, fire up the kitchen ... for just one needy soul.

But the reality is ... the needs in the Mid-South are much bigger.

We're not serving nutritious meals to just one person; the number is more like 25,484 meals, in just the next 30 days.

We're not providing safe shelter for just one homeless person; we're

providing 9,170 nights of safe shelter ... every 30 days.

For so many struggling or suffering this Christmas ... more than ever, in a difficult economy still hitting people hard ... we'll be here.

And amazingly, it doesn't take very much to feed and care for one person.

That's why your gifts are so helpful to this ministry. Big or small, they make a huge difference to the people who come to us for help.

Thank you so much for your generous partnership. Merry Christmas!

“TIME TO CHANGE”

An End To the Drifting

It was one of the coldest winters anyone in Memphis could remember. And on a frigid night in early January, with temperatures in the single digits, Allan got tired of being homeless.

“The weather got bad,” he remembers, “and I heard about the Mission. I was looking for a place to get out of the cold.”

He knew “it was time to change.”

Allan had been using drugs “off and on” since junior high. He had been married and divorced. He had drifted, for the most part sleeping at the homes of friends or relatives a few nights at a time before moving on.

But now, in the bitterness of January, he didn’t have anywhere to go. He had worn out his welcome with relatives. Exasperated by his ongoing drug abuse, members of his family had actually been forced to set up strict boundaries for his interaction with them: if he was hungry, he could come by their place to get something to eat, but he was never allowed to stay overnight.

So Allan, out of desperation, came to Memphis Union Mission.

We welcomed him, gave him a warm, safe place to sleep, and fed him.

Allan found something more here.

One of his friends, it turned out, had been here before him, and had enrolled in our program. He urged Allan to give it a try.

“I was ready to change my life,” Allan says, “so it was perfect for me.”

Now Allan finds his life turning around.

“It’s nice to have God back in my life,” he says with a big smile. “It’s good seeing life as it should be; feeling comfortable again. I don’t have the stress that I had before. It’s real positive.”

There are changes in others as well as in himself. In members of his family, for example, “I had burned that bridge,” Allan says. “They had to show me tough love.” But now they’re visiting him at the Mission every other week.

And Allan continues to grow.

He’s grateful for the Mission.

“They sure saved me,” he says. And we are grateful for your support.

Prayer Requests

Praise the Lord for continuing to meet the needs of the ministry during the past year in spite of the poor economy.

Praise God that we have more space for homeless guests this winter with the recent opening of our new Opportunity Center at 600 Poplar Ave.

We are entering our busiest time of the year. **Pray** that the Lord will protect our staff members from fatigue or discouragement during this often-hectic season.

Pray for the Lord’s peace over all of our facilities, but particularly our downtown facilities that serve the greatest volume of people.

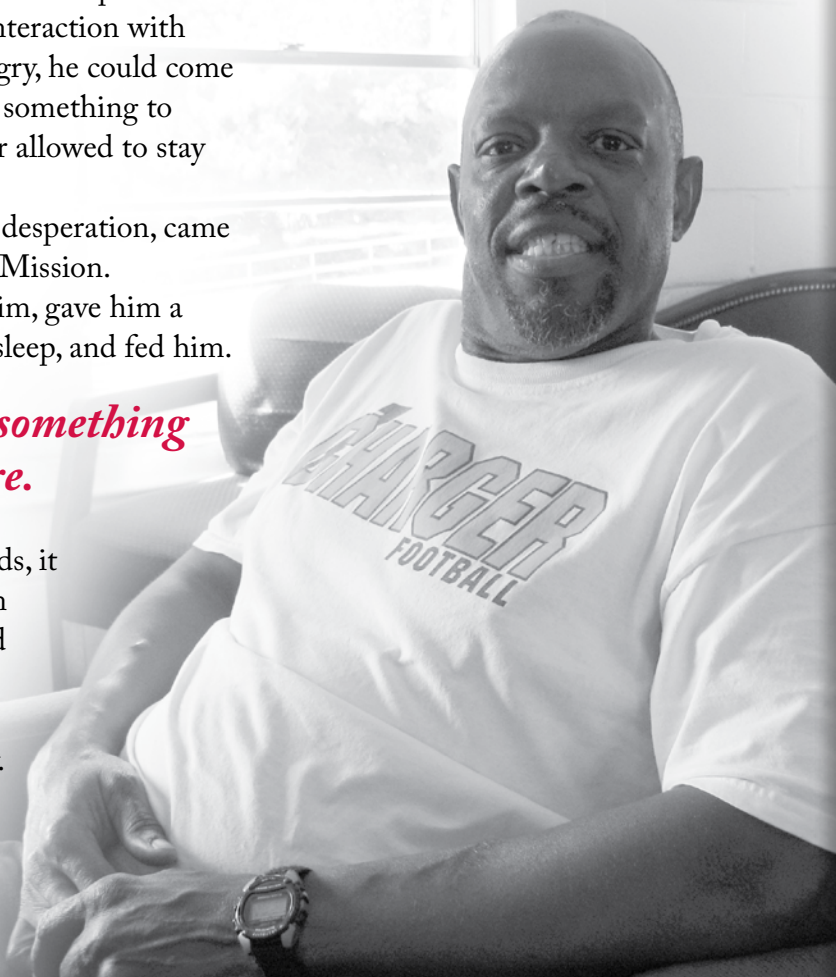
Many of the clients in our recovery programs get discouraged and lonely during the holidays. **Pray** that they will be encouraged during this time of year.

Pray for the many hurting men, women, and families who will come through our doors during the holidays. Pray that they will experience the love of Christ and that their lives will be transformed.

Pray that our Great Thanksgiving Banquet on November 24 and our Christmas Eve Banquet on December 24 will bless the many homeless, hungry people who attend.

Pray for God’s blessing on the many volunteers who will be helping us serve our guests during the holidays.

Pray that the Lord will supply us with plenty of coats, blankets and other items to distribute to our guests during this time.



Visit Us Online!

Come visit us at MemphisUnionMission.org
Our website has been updated and redesigned, and includes some new features.

Read stories of changed lives, find out about the latest

news and events, learn about volunteer opportunities.

Mission Needs

We will need the following items to help care for our guests during the holiday season and into the winter:

- Coats
- Blankets
- Sweaters
- Gloves
- Caps
- Socks
- Underwear (larger sizes)
- Shoes and belts
- Medical items (pain relievers, bandages, rubbing alcohol, and anti-bacterial ointment)
- Towels
- Twin-size sheet sets

We would be glad to help you organize a drive at your church, school or civic group. For more information, call (901) 526-8403.

Christmas Care Packages Needed

Looking for a practical way to care for someone in need this Christmas?

Christmas Care Packages are a great way to bring comfort and joy to our guests at Memphis Union Mission during the holiday season.

For each person you wish to help, get a shoe box and fill it with: briefs or boxers, socks, toboggan, gloves, candy, chewing gum, Bibles, a toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, soap, anti-bacterial wipes, shampoo, and lotion.

Wrap each box with Christmas wrapping paper and drop them off at the Mission by Wednesday, December 22.

If possible, please wrap boxes and



lids separately, and use a rubber band to fasten them together. This

way, guests won't have to tear the paper in order to open the box.

We will begin distributing the Care Packages to our guests on Christmas Eve. Any number of boxes is welcome, from 1 to 100. Thanks to you, the men and women at the Mission will know that they are not forgotten.

For more information, please call (901) 526-8403 or visit MemphisUnionMission.org.

Annual Coat Drive

When you're homeless during the winter, having a warm coat is a tremendous blessing. And for Memphis Union Mission, being able to distribute clean, usable coats is a tremendous ministry opportunity!

That's why the Mission once again has partnered with Burlington Coat Factory and OneWarmCoat.org to organize a city-wide coat drive that will last from now until January 14.



ONE WARM COAT™

During the drive, you may drop off your gently-used coats at any of the following Burlington Coat Factory Warehouse locations:

- 5100 Park Ave., Memphis
- 4991 Stage Rd., Memphis
- 550 Stateline Rd., Southaven
- 6480 Winchester Rd., Memphis

And, as always, donations can always be dropped off at Memphis Union Mission at 383 Poplar Ave. Thank you!

Burlington
Coat Factory