



Washington Street MISSION

"Rejoice in the Lord always.

I will say it again: Rejoice!"

Philippians 4:4

Easter 2009

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Dear Friends:

Easter should be a special time of rejoicing for all believers. Celebrating the new life we have found in the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is what the Easter season is all about.

At Washington Street Mission we also rejoice in the privilege we have of sharing the Easter message with many homeless men and women, children and families, who come to the Mission each day. With our expanded restroom, shower and laundry facilities in full operation, over 150 people join us for our neighborhood coffee hours each weekday morning. In addition, at our occasional Saturday morning breakfasts, sponsored by a wide variety of church groups and other organizations, we are serving over 250 people.

The good news of Easter is meant to be shared with people in spiritual and physical need. Our rejoicing grows stronger as we share the message that has given us new life. We rejoice as other people are discovering Jesus in the midst of their need, struggles and pain.

This year at Washington Street Mission we have a special reason to rejoice. We are approaching the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Mission. The first service at the Mission was officially held on January 10, 1910, and we will be celebrating that date as it approaches. But the key events leading up to the founding of the Mission occurred almost exactly one hundred years ago this Easter.

Famed evangelist Billy Sunday came to Springfield during the Easter season in 1909. He held a series of evangelistic meetings in a specially-constructed "tabernacle" at the northwest corner of First and Adams Streets. Total attendance over the six weeks of meetings he conducted was estimated at over 600,000 people.

Washington Street Mission was organized and began operation the following January under the leadership of several businessmen who were deeply impacted by the Billy Sunday campaign. The group included Robert T. Brown who as director of the Mission became the driving force behind its growing, successful ministry in its earliest years.

We invite you to celebrate and rejoice with us. If you have been affected by the ministry of the Mission over the years, we invite you to send us your stories and photos. Perhaps you volunteered at the Mission or served as a staff member. We would love to hear from you. Your personal contribution to our celebration is needed and will be appreciated.

Your prayers for this ministry and your generous financial support are also ways in which you can express your rejoicing with us. As we share the message of Easter with people in need in the Springfield community, you can rejoice with us.

Sincerely,

Kenneth E. Mitchell
Executive Director