



# Washington Street MISSION

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Easter 2017

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Dear Friends:

Every morning at Washington Street Mission we see many people who are discouraged. Perhaps family relationships are broken and they do not know how to repair them. Perhaps they have been unable to keep a job and do not know how to find another one. Perhaps addictions or mental health issues have overwhelmed them and they feel helpless in fighting against them. Perhaps they have been evicted from a home and are living on the street, in their car, or with friends or relatives, as they struggle to find a place of their own. We try to help them find hope.

Especially during this Easter season, we celebrate hope. We celebrate the truths that Jesus died on Good Friday to offer us forgiveness and rose from the grave on Easter Sunday to give us new life. Those truths give us hope. And they provide the foundation for the hope we try to help the people at the Mission discover for themselves. It is the only genuine antidote for discouragement.

As we recently started to focus more directly on housing issues at the Mission, we have been encouraged to see some tangible results. Three individuals who have regularly volunteered over the past year to help us clean the building after the morning coffee hours have now located permanent housing. Our support, assistance and encouragement were vital factors in helping them take this step forward. One of them had been homeless for at least ten years. We will continue to walk with them in the days ahead.

### **Our Mission:**

To share the love of Jesus Christ with the people of Springfield by providing opportunities that meet their spiritual and physical needs.

The hope of Jesus can transform every area of our lives as we allow him to work in our lives. He can restore broken relationships, give us power over addictions, and establish patterns of life that bring us into

community and health. We believe that this transformation comes most effectively through personal relationships with the people we serve. We strive to lead them into a personal relationship with Jesus and to allow him to change their lives in profound ways.

The importance of the type of relational ministry we practice at the Mission was highlighted in an academic study released by Baylor University in February. The study compared the different approaches to homelessness by faith-based organizations and by

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government programs in eleven cities. The researchers concluded that faith-based organizations were consistently better at addressing the issues faced by homeless individuals than government agencies. The key to the difference in results, according to the study, was a focus on developing relationships.

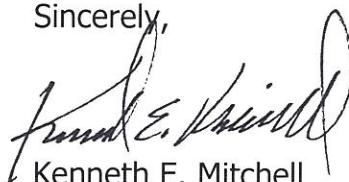
The study quoted the New City Initiative in Portland, Oregon, saying, "People don't become homeless when they run out of money, at least not right away. They become homeless when they run out of relationships. And this means that the solution to homelessness necessarily involves a reestablishment of relationships and community."

A summary of the study posted on a *Christianity Today* website in March stated, "Researchers discovered that faith-based organizations' relational approach leads to a deeper understanding of the complexity of homelessness and better outcomes for their clients and cities."

We need to remember how important relationships were for Jesus as well. As he was giving his final instructions to his closest disciples in the upper room, he told them, "I no longer call you servants. . . . Instead, I have called you friends . . ." (John 15:15). He wanted them to remember that their obedience to his commands was important, but his relationship with them was primary. Becoming a friend of Jesus is what the Easter message is all about for us and for the people we try to help.

Please give generously to support the ministry here. Your friendship and partnership in this ministry is vital.

Sincerely,



Kenneth E. Mitchell  
Executive Director