

# HOLIDAY LIGHTS

## Make Holiday Lights your new Christmas tradition!

Union Gospel Mission will once again be one of the featured charities benefiting from the upcoming Holiday Lights in the Park.

Last year, the Mission — and three other local charities — shared \$35,000 in what Mayor Chris Coleman proclaimed “a new holiday tradition in St. Paul.”

This year, visitors will once again be treated to a spectacular array of holiday lights and animated displays as part of a half-mile drive through Phalen Park, along Lake Phalen.

The event runs a total of six weeks, from November 22 to January 1. For more information, visit [www.lightsinthepark.org](http://www.lightsinthepark.org) ■



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## Where are they NOW?

The last time we spoke to Chad, he was adjusting to life at the Mission and getting his GED. Today he has his GED, has graduated from our Worknet program, and is applying for jobs.

“We come [into the Mission] broken and homeless. But they teach you to keep the faith and that God has a plan. I’ll find a job. It feels good to do things the right way. I want to be that kind of man. ■



“It feels good to do things the right way. I want to be that kind of man.” ❄️

## Holiday Meal Ticket

**YES, KEN!** I want to share the love of Jesus with hungry men, women, and children across the Twin Cities this Christmas. Please use my gift to provide nutritious meals and care for those in need on Christmas Day and all winter long. Enclosed is my gift of:

- \$25 to help provide meals and other lifesaving care.
- \$50 to help provide meals and other lifesaving care.
- \$100 to help provide meals and other lifesaving care.
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ to provide as much lifesaving care as possible.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

NC11-2011



Thank you! Please make your tax-deductible check payable to Union Gospel Mission. Mail it with this form in the enclosed envelope to P.O. Box 64389, St. Paul, MN 55164-0389. Questions? Call us at 651-228-1800. Give online at [www.ugmtc.org/december](http://www.ugmtc.org/december).

Yes! I would like to be kept up-to-date on important programs and efforts by joining the email list.

HERE IS MY EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Tried to kill himself ...

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“[It’s] like winning the lottery for a guy as broken as I am.”

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*The Christmas holidays will bring hundreds of broken, hurting men and women to the Mission this year. Because of your generous gifts, they’ll receive food, shelter, counseling, and hope. Many will use just one Christmas meal here as a springboard to make a whole new start.*

*Thank you for giving homeless people in the Twin Cities the best gift anyone could: new life. God bless you. ■*

**Chris’ art — and his love of sharing his work with people — kept him alive during the dark years.**



Stay connected:



OUR MISSION IS CHANGING LIVES!

INSIDE Binge, withdrawal, repeat PG 2 | Didn’t eat for two days PG 3 | Where are they now PG 4

### It’s a real “value meal”

When you can provide a traditional holiday meal for just **\$1.96**, your gift will go further than you probably ever imagined.



God is offering new life to hundreds of men, women, and children coming through our Mission programs — programs that you make possible when you give.



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

For more information, visit us online at: [www.ugmtc.org](http://www.ugmtc.org)

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS ISSUE

# Twin Cities MESSENGER

DECEMBER 2011 | VOL. 10, NO. 9

## Tried to end it all on Christmas Eve

“I used to be terrified of life.”

It was Christmas Eve and I got on the roof of a three-story building,” Chris says. He’d been drinking. “I thought about jumping for a long time ...” and then he did — but it didn’t work. “The back of my head split open, and my shoulder and foot were permanently injured.

“I thought about jumping for a long time.”

“Afterward I was really frustrated that it didn’t work. I just don’t like the holiday season; it sucks the life out of me.”

An alcoholic for 20 years, Chris lost his house in 2007. He’s been homeless for the last four years. “Outside in the Minnesota winter, you have to find something to get out of the wind. You can survive on egg whites. All I ate were raw egg whites for



Thanks to donations like yours, Chris is now sober and working through our long-term recovery program. ❄️

quite a while.”

But today Chris is sober and enrolled in our long-term recovery program.

“I used to be terrified of life. I’ve learned so much in my three months here, especially from watching the staff at the Mission’s learning center: forgiveness, grace, real

sympathy. Jesus got down to eye level with people, and if you had a camera in the Mission, you’d see the staff do it every hour.

“I know that God has a plan — I’ve turned from fear to faith. Now that I’m in the program, I have months to listen to Him. Having that

(continued on back page)

**MERKLE**  
 USP Union Gospel Mission

Job Description: USP-28029NWL - NWLT  
 Date: 11-2011  
 Job #: 28029  
 Acct. Sup. L. Wattles  
 Acct. Sup. C. Dillon  
 GP: K. Peron

Newsletter: 22" x 11" flat w. flap, 8.5" x 11" vertical fold then horizontal letterfold, 1st/4pgs, Prints 4C | 4C, Full Bleed, Medium Coverage 60# White Offset

A MESSAGE FROM KEN PETERSON,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



the **Heart** of the **matter**

## We're all strangers and pilgrims

I think Jesus understands the homeless much better than you or I do. In fact, I think Jesus even has more in common with the homeless than we do.

Doesn't the Bible say that "foxes have a den, birds of the air have their nests, but the son of man has no place to lay his head"?

That's how the homeless feel — they have no safe place to lay their head. They never really rest because they're never really safe.

**Thanks to your generosity, they have a safe place within our walls.**

But when they walk through our doors at Christmastime — for a hot meal you help provide them — you can literally watch them relax. They breathe a little deeper. They sit a little easier. They rest. Thanks to your generosity, they have a safe place within our walls.

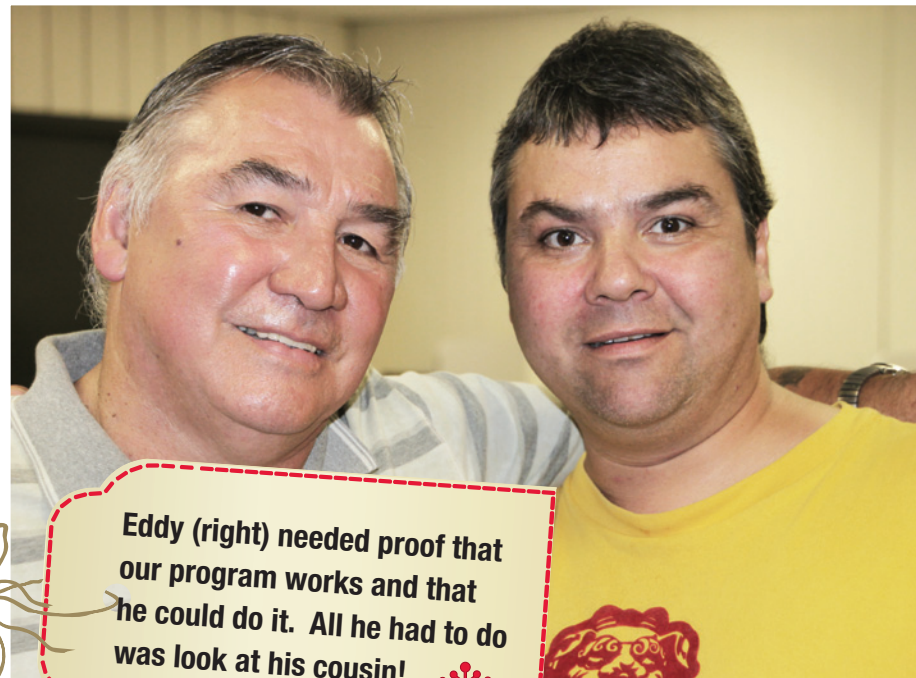
And you and I know that their real home can be in heaven if they find Jesus. So we start by serving them a meal, or finding a bed for them, or sometimes just by listening. But why do we do it?

Because we're all strangers and pilgrims here on this earth. None of us are home. But you and I have found our rest in Christ — and we want the hungry and hurting in our community to find the same Savior and the same rest.

Your gift this Christmas provides food, warmth, and eternal hope to our fellow strangers and pilgrims. Thank you and God bless you for it!

*Ken Peterson*

# Christmas used to be the worst day of the year — but no more



Eddy (right) needed proof that our program works and that he could do it. All he had to do was look at his cousin!

## Binge, withdrawal, repeat

When Eddy was admitted to our Christ Recover Center this summer, we asked if he was related to Tom. Tom had completed our program and had been sober for 10 years.

Turns out they are first cousins, and neither man knew that the other struggled with addiction. Now Eddy had a priceless

**"I see things so differently now."**

gift: a cousin to show him that he could break the chains of his addiction. Eddy had been homeless for years — but he was getting worse. "I'd go through withdrawals and then I'd go on

another binge. I was burning all my bridges, stealing — even cheating my drug dealer."

But he was smart about his homelessness. Each November he would go into treatment so he could spend the holidays indoors. But he always started drinking and drugging again, and this time it was worse.

"The next step for me was death." Finally, Eddy found the Mission. Today he's sober and healthy. "I came with nothing. Now I have three meals a day and a roof over my head. I want to be around when my kids grow up. And if I stay in here, that will happen." ■

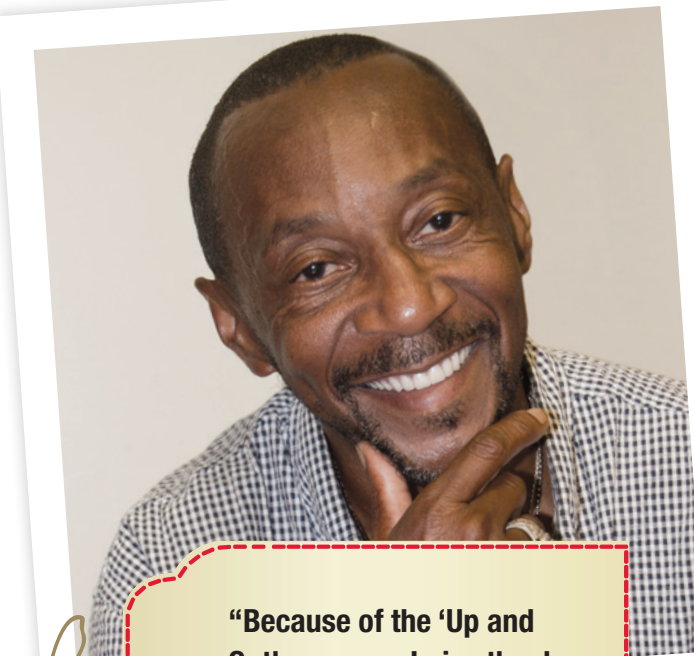
## Alone and hungry on Christmas

For Henry, his worst Christmas was just last year. "I was alone in a shelter and didn't have anything to eat. I didn't talk to a single person the whole day and I felt like nobody cared. I was thinking how nobody wants you when you're down and out."

Henry is a veteran who had steady jobs after leaving military service. But his job as a bus driver was cut in 2008 and he hasn't found work since. At his lowest point, he was homeless for two years.

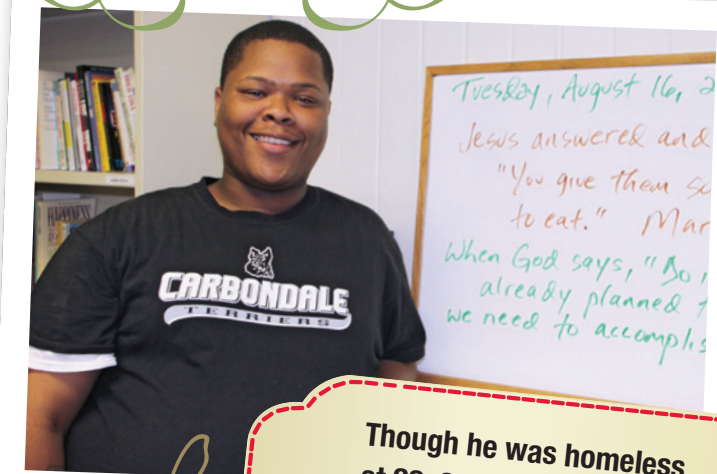
But he ended up on a cot in our Mission one night and applied for our "Up and Out" program. We had space for him, and that was the moment his life turned around.

"I was down and out, had no place to go, and they actually cared about me. I give thanks every time I wake up. ■



"Because of the 'Up and Out' program, I give thanks every time I wake up!"

— Henry



Though he was homeless at 22, Christopher is now safe at the Mission. And it started with one meal!

## "I didn't eat for two days"

Christopher was 22 and homeless. His dad was in prison and his mom had passed away. "She was my best friend," he says, "and I didn't have anywhere else to go."

"The worst thing about being homeless is waking up in the morning and having people jump you and steal your things. I got stabbed once. And I didn't like how people on the street would look at me and judge me. They'd say, 'He's got bags,' and it felt so awful."

Today Christopher is here at the Mission. "This is God's safe house for me. If I would have stayed on the street, I would have ended up in jail or doing something I really wouldn't want to do."

He says it's hard right now, but, "This was meant to happen to make me a better man. I know God more and I'm getting help with school. I don't have any money right now but I'm very content." ■

Each year our Christmas dinners offer hope to hurting souls, like Eddy, Henry, and Christopher. Providing a hurting neighbor with a meal this Christmas — at just \$1.96 per meal — might be the most meaningful gift you can give this holiday season. Please GIVE A GENEROUS GIFT today, and let us turn your kindness into Christmas hope. Thank you.

## Winter items needed for Christmas bags

There are only a few weeks left to donate winter items for the Mission's annual Christmas bag giveaway for the homeless here in the Twin Cities.

This year, the Mission's goal is to give 350 bags to men in our residential programs and to those coming off the streets.

Items needed most include:

- ❄ Winter gloves
- ❄ Soap and deodorant
- ❄ Warm socks
- ❄ Toothpaste and toothbrushes
- ❄ Winter hats
- ❄ Razors and shaving gel

For more information on last-minute donations, contact the Mission at 651-789-7606.

Thank you!



## Lower your taxes!

### Your gift right now is tax deductible

If we receive your gift by check on or before December 31, the amount is deductible on your 2011 federal tax return! Providing your hurting neighbors with a hot meal — with a side of hope — is a great way to experience God's grace and lower your taxes.

Questions? Check with your accountant or financial advisor, or call us at 651-228-1800. ■



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