

THE PRODIGAL'S PATH

A Message from Union Gospel Mission
Executive Director Jason Christensen



Mercy Over Sacrifice

During the time of Christ's ministry on earth, sharing a meal held deeper meaning than it does today. Jesus sent a powerful message based on the people with whom He chose to dine. In Capernaum, it was the house of the deeply reviled tax collector, Matthew.

In his Gospel, Matthew shares, "...Sinners came and were sitting with Him and His Disciples." When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But, when He heard this, He said, "Those who are well have no need for a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners." (Matthew 9: 9-13)

Even more powerful: On the night before He died, knowing Judas would betray Him, Jesus still shared a meal with him.

At UGM, our mission is to feed the hungry, restore the addict, and love our neighbor. This Thanksgiving season we will deliver over 900 baskets to low-income families identified by our church partners and will serve 900 meals to the homeless through our Burnside location and our Search + Rescue team.

We invite you to join us in this endeavor. We also recognize making a gift can be a sacrifice for many individuals and families. But know this: Support for our Thanksgiving meal program and Search + Rescue is also an act of mercy.

Thank you all for your dedication. Wishing you and yours a blessed Thanksgiving.

Grateful to serve,

Jason Christensen



THE JOURNEY HOME

The campaign to build a center for homeless women and children



The Journey Home Campaign

The Journey Home Campaign to build a new home for women and their children is progressing successfully!

We have broken ground and are actively building on the new site. The continued partnership of our generous donors, businesses, churches, and foundations are the reason we are seeing this dream come true. We have been encouraged by the support of the County Employees to help us navigate the permitting process and we are right on schedule. This new construction consists of a 53,457 square-foot facility in northwest Portland that will expand LifeChange programming to a larger number of single women and women with children. This new facility will double our capacity to serve more than 2,000 women and children in the next decade as they work to end cycles of addiction, poverty, and abuse.

For more updates about The Journey Home, please visit our website at ugmportland.org/journeyhome

LIFECHANGE LETTER

is a publication of Union Gospel Mission

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UNION GOSPEL MISSION

LIFECHANGE LETTER

Feeding the hungry, restoring the addict and loving our neighbor since 1927.

NOVEMBER 2022

Hannah's Story

Hannah grew up in Montana. Her parents argued constantly, "We lived in an unhappy home," Hannah says. She began drinking and using marijuana at 14 to help numb the pain that came with a dysfunctional family.

Shortly after high school Hannah was married and got pregnant with her first child. The pressures of supporting a family came at a young age for Hannah. Early in her marriage, her husband began to abuse her physically and emotionally. This abuse continued daily for the next 12 years.

Due to the abuse and challenges at home, Hannah separated from her family. She got caught up with gang members and drug dealers. "I felt the need to use drugs to deal with who I had become. I wasn't happy with myself," explains Hannah. She ended up in jail. Away from the drugs and alcohol she started to process the pain in her life and cried out to God for help.

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Hannah learned about UGM in Portland from an old friend who had been in a similar situation. Hearing about her friend's amazing life-changing progress motivated Hannah to reach out to UGM.

It was hard for Hannah to uproot her family and come to Portland, but she did, knowing it was God providing a way out. Hannah says, "When I entered those doors at the LifeChange center, I felt an overwhelming sense of peace. I no longer had to carry around the shame and guilt I had felt for so long." Over the past year, Hannah has begun to learn who she is through God's eyes. She understands that it's okay to fail and that God's grace is sufficient.

Hannah's children are also healing and growing. "I'm able to connect with my kids in a safe environment, with no worries. I finally know who they are on a deeper personal level." Her son was nervous on his first day of school and asked Hannah to pray

for him. "It makes me so happy to know that my son can come to his mom for prayer and that God is there for him when he is feeling lonely or afraid."

Hannah has been sober for nearly two years and wants to help others in similar situations. She hopes that by telling her story she can motivate women to reach out and know that they are not alone and there is hope.

"Coming to UGM was hard but it was 100% worth it. This is just the beginning. I'm just now starting to live my new life."

If you know of a woman battling addiction, homelessness, or domestic abuse and she is interested in a life change, contact LifeChange for Women and Their Children at 503-802-2271.



Loving our Neighbors

THIS THANKSGIVING SEASON



Thanksgiving has always been a special season at the Mission. The team at UGM is busy preparing to serve more than 900 Thanksgiving meals to our neighbors experiencing homelessness. This year we will serve a special Thanksgiving dinner at our overnight winter shelter, to our friends on Search + Rescue who are living in camps and on the streets, and at our downtown location. We will also be packing 900 Thanksgiving food baskets for families in need. These baskets include a voucher for a turkey that can be used at a local grocer and all the fixings for a traditional Thanksgiving dinner.

Thank you for continuing to partner with us to make the holidays special for those we serve!

Pie and Coffee Needed! We could use donations of fully cooked and packaged pumpkin pie and ground or whole bean coffee for this year's celebration. These items can be dropped off at 3 NW Third Avenue Portland, OR 97209.

Giving Thanks by Giving Back

As we approach our 100th anniversary, UGM Portland would like to announce the launch of our Planned Giving Department.

Your support has been the bedrock upon which UGM Portland was built. While the last several years presented extraordinary challenges, your commitment never wavered. Together, we continued to live out God's call. Now we would like to provide an opportunity for you to plan for and leave a legacy of impact to sustain and support our continued growth.

With your commitment to longer-term support, you will ensure UGM Portland feeds the hungry, restores the addict and loves our neighbors for generations.

As we enter a time of giving thanks, many are considering helping those in need with gifts by year-end. Three popular gifts are transfers of stock, mutual fund shares and IRA charitable rollovers. Each gift type will impact a life, while providing potential tax benefits.

For more information, as well as wiring instructions and our Tax ID Number, please contact Ron Smicker at 971-533-4678.

"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

NOVEMBER 2022

UGM BY THE NUMBERS: OCTOBER 2021 – AUGUST 2022



TOTAL MEALS
197,253



SEARCH+RESCUE KITS
20,398



EMERGENCY FOOD BOXES
1,135



DINNERS
7,704



SACK LUNCHES
7,320



HOT BREAKFAST AND LUNCH
63,700