



Urban Mission Ministries, Inc.

# BRIGHT HORIZONS

Rev. Bruce Hitchcock, Executive Director

Deborah Schaffer, Associate Director

Angie Brown, Editor

December 2003

## EMMANUEL

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### Don't Forget!

Remember to save your soda pop cans for Urban Mission this Holiday Season. Please set them aside for our recycling Program.

### Seasons Greeting your friends at Urban Mission:

Rev. Bruce Hitchcock

Deborah Schaffer

Sue Rogers

Debra Bryan

Greta Bigsby

Sharon Kirtdoll

Linda Poe

Ralph Washington

Robert Payton

Angie Brown

Sandra Chandler

Toni Hubbard

Shannan Farmer

Lou Petrozzi

There are some interesting connections between the birth of Jesus and the living conditions of the majority of those in the Upper Ohio Valley. Both at the time of the Savior's birth and our time, transition, poverty, health care, taxes, the economy, moral integrity and political leadership were, and are, major issues. In this backdrop of human misery the major story then and now is the gift of Jesus Christ to the world and the gifts of the Kings to Emmanuel.

It is far too easy to focus upon the negative aspects of life in our world. We can become lost in the needs of the people. We can become angry over economic and social injustice. What preacher wouldn't love the opportunity to address the human hubris, greed and arrogance that allows for the economic destruction of retirees in the face of bonuses for the already wealthy? What prophet wouldn't love to address the congress and president of the USA over decades of corruption that allows for and even encourages an unforgivable level of poverty and injustice in this nation? We can literally lose ourselves in the anger of our righteous indignation. I could easily write about each identified similarity between our time and the time of Jesus, but that would miss the major point of the story of the Gospel.

In a world dominated by power and greed, God chose to do something radical. God chose to give. When everyone else was busy trying to get rich, get into power or remain in power, God chose to freely give. In the face of human exploitation, God simply gave the Gift of the ages. God gave Jesus. God reached into the Divine heart and placed Jesus in the human heart. There are no strings attached to the Gift. We have

the choice of accepting, rejection, embracing or even killing this Jesus. Many accept the gift only to exploit Jesus for their own ends. Some people never change. Others receive the Gift and are transformed. Some recognize the Divine nature of the Gift and seek to become like the Gift. They are the ones who begin to give like God.

The Kings gave the most valuable possessions they had to the Gift. They gave the riches of their office. The giving came only after a long journey in search of God's hope in the world. It would not hurt those of us living today to look at the pattern offered by God and by the Kings. Christianity has always been about the grace of giving ourselves to those in need. God did that in Jesus Christ. The Kings responded by giving of themselves to Jesus. We can respond to the overwhelming need of our world by giving the only gift we have that we will never lose. That gift is the grace and love of God. This gift is life giving, hopeful, eternal and never failing. This gift never runs out. It is constantly renewed by God.

Perhaps the current conditions best serve to remind us of what we have to offer. Sure we give away food, shelter, coats, shoes, hats, gloves, turkeys, and Christmas gifts. These are vehicles by which we deliver faith, hope and love. Even without our usual means of delivering the gospel we still would offer Jesus Christ to our world. Some see the items offered as an end. For some folks the food and stuff is all that matters. For those who give, the end is offering Jesus Christ. Receive Jesus Christ and offer Jesus Christ. Then our hope and life is secure and eternal.

*-Love, Pastor Bruce*

## Christmas at Urban Mission

### CHRISTMAS KIDS & TEEN STOCKINGS

Things are almost set for our Christmas Kids and Teen Stockings. It's not too late to be a part of these programs! If you are interested in "adopting a child", call Linda today at 740-282-2911 and help us with the Program. All gifts should be returned to the Urban Mission by **Monday, December 15.**

Perhaps you would like to be a part of Operation Teen Stockings this year. Just fill a Christmas stocking or Holiday gift bag with toiletries for a teen female or male. Please have the stockings back to Urban Mission by **Friday, December 5.**

### MISSION REJOICE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE



On Saturday, December 20, 2003 at 6:00 p.m., our Mission Rejoice families will be treated to a very special candlelight worship service. This will be a night full of worship, music, joy and fellowship as we celebrate the true meaning of Christmas – the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

### THANK YOU!

A special thank you goes to everyone who participated in the Weirton Christmas Parade. It was a day of fun for all involved! Thank you for all of your help.

### Hutton House Christmas

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas here at the shelter. The Christmas trees have been pulled out and are ready to be decorated. The children are talking about what they want Santa to bring them and the parents try to explain that Santa can't bring everything they want. This is a very stressful time of year for low-income and homeless families. Being on a fixed income makes it hard to meet the day to day needs for themselves and their children, let alone making sure there is something under the tree on Christmas morning. As I assure the parent's that there will be something for all the children on Christmas morning, I also ask them what would they like. The usual answer is "Nothing, just something for my kids."

Would you like to help Christmas happen at the Shelter? You could buy a gift for a child, teen or adults, or donate to make our apartments a home (linens, sofa beds, cleaning supplies, 2004 calendars, curtains, paper products, etc.) If you would like to become involved, please call me at 740-282-8903.  
*-Debra Bryan,*

### MITTEN TREE



Once again the Urban Mission will have a Mitten Tree that will be filled with all sorts of items. Our Mitten tree will have socks, underwear, hats, scarves, gloves and mittens for children and adults. Donations of these items can be brought to the Mission by **December 11.**

### CHRISTMAS DISTRIBUTIONS

Christmas Kid's, Teen Stockings and Mitten Tree items will be distributed at Urban Mission on Thursday and **Friday, December 18 & 19, 2003.**

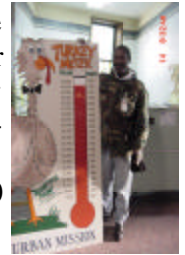
### CHRISTMAS PARADE



Look for the Urban Mission's float in the Steubenville Christmas Parade on December 6, 2003. This year's float theme will be "The Twelve Days of Christmas".

### Thanksgiving Update

As of this printing, November 18, we have received \$41,700 towards our Thanksgiving goal. Because of your generous support we are able to provide all the fixings for a traditional Thanksgiving dinner for 1,200 – 1,500 families. Thank you to each of you.



### REACH OUT AND TOUCH

There is a serious need for help in the Tri-State area. Hunger is all around us and as long as we don't pay attention, it will go on. But thanks to the people who work here at Urban Mission and all those who donate to us, we have made a small dent in the hunger need of this area and we have gained ground in feeding the hungry. This past distribution in West Virginia was wonderful. The joy that the people expressed when receiving their bag was overwhelming. They gave all the thanks in the world for receiving food. Thanks to the food bank, individuals and stores who helped us make it possible. We all did the ultimate . . . Reaching out and touching lives. The people of West Virginia give thanks to all of you along with the Urban Mission. Keep up the good work and God bless you all for reaching out to make this area a better place.

*-Robert Payton, Warehouse Assistant Director*

## Warm Blankets for the Winter

The Warm Up program has grown beyond our biggest expectations. Dozens of volunteers crochet or knit blocks that are connected by other volunteers to become blankets. Those blankets are given to people who are homeless or have been diagnosed with AIDS. Each family leaving Hutton House receives one of the blankets. Some are distributed through the local branch of American Red Cross to families who have had house fires. Other blankets are placed with homeless persons by Jefferson Behavioral Health System. Most are given to Jefferson County residents.

Many of our volunteers are elderly shut-ins who are able to contribute through this program. They work at their leisure and periodically send their collections to the Urban Mission.

Some send completely finished blankets. Others send blocks of various colors. The blocks are tastefully combined into multi-hued finished blankets. This is a good project for using small amounts of left over yarn.

A few of our valuable volunteers prefer to work on small items. We receive boxes of beautiful baby sweaters, blankets, and tiny hats that would fit an orange from out of town volunteers several times a year. The baby items are given to needy families. Preemie sizes are especially hard to find, so we are always thankful to receive those.



*Hard at work making blankets for those in need.*

Some of our volunteers work on this project at the craft room located in the Urban Mission Ministry Center. It is not unusual to see blocks spread on a table several days a week and watch the progress of blankets in the making. Volunteer, Lilla (Tiny) Washington, offers instruction for those wishing to learn the basics of crochet or knitting on Wednesdays at the craft room. Anyone wishing to participate can learn a new skill, use our donated yarn, and enjoy the fellowship of other volunteers. The volunteer hours are very valuable in qualifying Hutton House for much needed funding.

Mary Joy VanDyne is the volunteer coordinator for this Hutton House project. She receives donations of yarn from several church mission groups and individuals. She also handles the storage and distribution of the finished blankets.

Our hope is that hearts, as well as bodies, will be warmed by the love that goes into the making of the blankets.

**-Sandra Chandler, Education Director**

*Did you know that Urban Mission also collects regular blankets for our Blankets for Warmth Program. If you have blankets to donate, please contact us at 740-282-8010 or bring them to the Warehouse, 311 N. 6th Street.*

## PARISH NURSE NEWS: HAND WASHING

What is the most effective way of preventing the spread of infection? Antibiotics, Immunizations, Hand washing or Disinfectants. If you answered "Hand Washing", you are correct. Although there have been many advances in health care practices during the years, hand washing is still the most effective way of preventing the spread of infection.

Hand washing is an important practice. This simple practice that was taught to you by your mother and reinforced by your teachers, is still your best protection from catching an infectious disease. Let's take a few minutes and review hand washing practices.

Hands should be washed at the following times: when visibly soiled, after using the bathroom, before preparing and eating foods, after touching an unknown substance, and whenever you think it would be a good idea. Studies have shown that many viruses live for a period of time on inanimate objects, so if you think that you have

touched something that could be contaminated, wash your hands. Ideally hands should be washed with running water and liquid soap. First wet your hands with water, then apply the liquid soap. Make a lot of suds and wash all parts of your hands, including between the fingers. Rinse your hands well to remove all of the soap. Wipe your hands with a clean towel or paper towel.

If you are unable to wash your hands with soap and water, it is acceptable to use one of the antibacterial hand washing liquids or gels. Most of these cleaners contain alcohol, which is drying to the skin. Only use these cleaners when you cannot use soap and water. Wash your hands with soap and water as soon as possible.

The cold and flu season is coming. Hand washing is one good measure to prevent the transmission of these viruses. Don't forget to wash those hands and drown those germs.

**-Michalene A. King, RN, MSED, MSN**

**DECEMBER 2003**

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### Upcoming Events in December 2003

1	Parish Nurse	11:00 AM
2	Hunger Committee Meeting	10:00 AM
3	Healthy Bingo (Dinning Room) Program/Evaluation Committee Meeting Lupus Support Group Meeting	1:00 PM 2:00 PM 6:00 PM
4	Board of Directors Meeting	4:30 PM
6	Mission Rejoice: Word of Life Fellowship	6:00 PM
8	Parish Nurse	11:00 AM
9	Packing of Food Distribution Bags Finance Committee Meeting	9:00 AM 6:00 PM
11	God's Pantry West Virginia Food and Toy Distribution	9-12
13	Mission Rejoice: Mt. Pleasant Friends and Covenant Presbyterian	6:00 PM
15	Parish Nurse	11:00 AM
16	Packing of Food Distribution Bags	9:00 AM
18	God's Pantry Ohio Food Distribution	9-12;1-3
18-19	Christmas Kids, Teen Stocking and Mitten Tree Distributions	9-12;1-3
20	Mission Rejoice Candlelight Service: Rev. Bruce Hitchcock Word of Truth Church	6:00 PM
22	Parish Nurse	11:00 AM
24-31	Mission Closed for the Holiday's	

#### We need your help!

The Unity Kitchen is in need of a new large size microwave. If you can help call, Toni at 740-282-8010.



#### Holiday Schedule

Urban Mission will be closed **December 24, 2003 - January 2, 2004** to allow our employees to spend time with their families. The Mission will reopen on **Monday, January 5, 2004** for regular business hours. There will be no Mission Rejoice on January 3. Services will begin again on January 10, 2004.

*Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!*