OUR MISSION  To offer life changing hope through the Gospel of Jesus Christ to homeless men, women, and children through programs to deliver food, shelter, counseling and discipleship
From the DIRECTOR

“Some wish to live within the sound of church or chapel bell. I wish to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell.”

—C.T. Studd

Sometime within the last month, I went to bed with everything normal and woke up in the Twilight Zone. More changed in how we operate at Gateway Rescue Mission in one week than in the last 15 years combined.

I did not factor a coronavirus pandemic into my strategic plan for 2020. Never in my wildest imagination did I envision us simultaneously doing the following, even if temporary.

• Closing our Pearl Thrift Store. (major financial hit.)
• Telling volunteers not to come.
• Housing New Life Program residents only in our shelter. (not accepting overnight homeless walk-in guests.)
• Closing our Administrative Office.
• Feeding to-go sandwich bags when our kitchen is perfectly fine.
• Shutting down most Administrative Office functions.
• Closing the gates to keep traffic out.

We continue to house people and provide meals. We still preach the Gospel for sure. With no volunteers to help out, our staff has stepped up to the plate doing double, sometimes triple duty on the preaching front.

God had blessed us with a financial cushion for emergencies. We often discussed whether God was laying up in times of plenty for a future time of need, much like He did in Egypt in the days of Joseph. It appears that time of need is upon us.

In a split second, we had to balance our mission of caring for the most vulnerable with keeping a coronavirus out of our shelter. We made the hard, difficult decision, at least for now, to prioritize housing the residents in our New Life Program who have been working hard to build a new life. We have them basically on lockdown to do everything possible to keep the virus out.

We daily assess a constantly changing landscape. We wash hands and disinfect everything nailed down. We pray for God to protect our ministry much as He did when the death angel passed over Egypt, but did not strike the houses with the Passover blood on the door.

The health officials told us if we felt sick to go to our health service provider. But the homeless don’t have a health service provider. It didn’t take me long to figure out that the folks who call Gateway Rescue Mission home didn’t have many options. This crisis is so big that nobody knows what to do if we get an outbreak anywhere, much less at a homeless shelter. So, we were left to figure things out as best we could.

At the same time, we have our own family health concerns. Gateway employees have spouses who work in hospitals. My baby daughter, who graduated from nursing school just last summer, is working directly with Covid 19 patients. Sometimes God not only throws us into the battle, but our family too.

We will make it through this. I firmly believe Gateway Rescue Mission will come out stronger than before. Why? Because in a time like this you don’t have the luxury of allowing inefficiency. Some uncomfortable, but potentially beneficial changes have now been put into place because we don’t have a choice.

One thing this teaches us. We can and should plan. We should have goals and work to achieve them. But ultimately, we aren’t in control. Look at just how quickly we’ve gone from normal to no eating out, no ball games, no going to church, no going to a movie or concert. Maybe God wants us to take a time-out as a people and call upon His Name because ultimately, only God controls the outcome. For that, I am thankful.

Rex Baker
Executive Director
Gateway Rescue Mission

Visit gatewaymission.org for more information on how you can help someone today.
The Gateway lunch crew gives serving on the front lines a new meaning. They’ve donned masks, gloves and keep pumping the food out while following social-distancing protocols. *(pictured on the front cover left to right, Marcus, Snow and Blake)* Steven is shown preparing a long line of sandwich bags. Normally, he would be surrounded by volunteers, but these aren’t normal times.

Our shelter crew daily goes beyond the line of duty cleaning bathrooms, mopping floors, and making cleaning solution out of bleach and water. They work hard to keep the place spic, span and virus free.

We’ve got some Gateway Second Lieutenants who are shining through this time. Like Lieutenant Dan, who made sure Forrest Gump and Bubba had dry socks, these guys make sure the work gets done, people have something to eat and clean clothes to wear.

Times like this separate the sheep from the wolves; the weak from the strong. We are seeing that at Gateway Rescue Mission. We’re having people with character and integrity step up. We’ve had some naysayers and pretenders leave our program. A crisis will bring out your inner character and we are seeing that unfold at Gateway Rescue Mission.

*Editor’s Note: This is what I call a rough-cut newsletter. We don’t strive to make this newsletter slick. It’s meant to give you, our Gateway family, a snapshot in time of what is going on in and through our ministry. However, this newsletter comes during a time of duress. It doesn’t contain smiles or deep, philosophical writing. I ask your continued prayers and support through this time. As of this writing, I do not know when it will end. Yet, I know that Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.*
Precious is the sight of the U.S. Foods truck pulling up at Gateway with a load of bottled water. We’re going through lots of bottled water during this situation. Antoine is pictured helping stack the water. Popsicle, our trusty feline, is pictured supervising the water distribution from her throne in the warehouse.

We ask that you, our Gateway family, pray that God will continue place His protection around our mission. Pray for the safety of our employees, our program residents and all our families. We are praying for yours also. Pray that God will continue to supply our financial needs and meet the spiritual needs of those going through this most unusual time at Gateway Rescue Mission.

A NOTE TO OUR DONORS: We appreciate your continued financial support during this time. Please be patient with us in getting a receipt back to you for financial donations. Our Administrative personnel are not in the office at this time to process receipts. We apologize for this situation and want you to know that as soon as we are given the green light to open our office, we will work overtime to get your receipts to you.

Gateway Needs

- Bottled water. We are handing out bottled water with each sandwich bag and need lots of H2O.
- Condiment supplies, such as packets of mustard and mayonnaise. These can be ordered through Amazon and shipped directly to Gateway. (This is highly preferred these days.) We are going through sandwich supplies like the U.S. Army went through bullets at the Battle of the Bulge.
- Packets of nabs, cookies, candy bars, etc. to put in sandwich bags.
- Hand sanitizer.

- Special Notice- We ask that during this time, order these items through suppliers that ship, such as Amazon and send them directly to Gateway Rescue Mission, 328 South Gallatin Street, Jackson, MS 39203. We are operating on a lockdown basis, meaning our gates are closed except during lunch time. At this time, we are not able to accept donations of pre-cooked food. We are also not able to accept donations of clothing and household items. As soon as the current situation lifts, we will return to normal on all those fronts.

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