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
On the Sunday following Thanksgiving, the doctor looked at my test results and said “well, you are a breakthrough case.” In that moment, Covid-19 went from theory to reality in my world. I had been vaccinated and had taken all the proper precautions. In retrospect, I had sort of adopted a “it probably won’t happen to me” mentality. But it did.

Fortunately, my case was relatively mild. Cough, sinus drainage, headache, stomach issues, loss of most of my smell and some taste, and a few days of what I call Covid fog were the main symptoms. I know others who have not been so fortunate.

So as we approach Christmas at Gateway Rescue Mission, I’m understanding just how quick everything can change. One minute your main concern is the Egg Bowl score and the next minute you’re isolating from the known world and praying that those monoclonal antibodies really do work.

Allow me to share a few Christmas thoughts from a unique perspective of writing this letter from Covid isolation at home. I’m really blessed to have a good, faithful team at Gateway to do the work of rescue ministry. We have a colorful cast of characters who prepare the meals, do the laundry and carry on through adversity.

I’m blessed to have friends who called to check on us. We’re blessed to have neighbors like Brenda and Ken, who brought over soup and left it at the front door.

One recent night at Gateway, we held an informal group meeting with the residents in our New Life Program. One of the residents said that he was learning to appreciate and get along with “this group of chaotic, dysfunctional brothers.” I laughed and promised him I would borrow that phrase, and I’m doing that right now.

I’m reminded in reading the Christmas story that Jesus was born in the midst of chaos. You don’t get much more chaotic than being born in a barn among the animals while on a long trip. This Christmas at Gateway will probably be a bit chaotic. We are renovating the showers and restrooms in our shelter. We are dealing with clogged drains and all the hustle that goes with closing out the year at a rescue mission.

My wife and I typically order pizza on Friday night. The Friday night after Thanksgiving, she said “I can’t taste my pizza.” That was our first realization that what we thought was a typical case of the crud was something more for both of us. But on the bright side, I can’t smell Pippi’s litter box right now.

I have friends who will have an empty place at the table this Christmas because of Covid 19. Others have lost loved ones due to cancer or other health issues. However, the hope we have in Christ transcends the temporary troubles and sorrows of this world. The birth of the Christ child in the manger represents new life.

The Gateway Rescue Mission family wishes you all a meaningful Christmas season. Thank you for your support and your prayers in 2021. Whatever chaos comes your way, may you know that the Jesus born long ago reigns in heaven today. Jesus is our hope and our future.

Rex Baker
Executive Director
Gateway Rescue Mission
We are preparing for Christmas at Gateway Rescue Mission. The tree is up and our guys are in the Christmas spirit. Marvin, Matt, and Jimmy (right to left) posed under the Christmas stockings and a group gathered around the tree for a Christmas picture.

Our kitchen crew is busy preparing turkey and dressing (a stable at the Gateway table for both Thanksgiving and Christmas). Joe is our turkey wizard and Jamie is a chef de jour at making dressing and sweet potato casserole.

As we close out 2021, we thank the Lord for sustaining us throughout this year. God is changing lives at Gateway Rescue Mission. We see the beauty of God healing broken people and then using them to help other broken people.

In reality, we are all broken. We put our game face on when we go out in public, to church, to work. But inwardly, everyone is fighting a battle that you probably don’t know about. So this Christmas, be kind. Know that God is still in the business of rescuing and transforming people. We wish you the peace of Christ this Christmas season.
We would like to give a big shout-out to the members of the Pro Football Retired Players Association. The Mississippi chapter of the Retired Players Association dropped by to serve on the day before Thanksgiving. They always bring lively banter, smiles, and stories about whose team is best.

Volunteers have also dropped by to provide decorations and smiles this Christmas season. Covid-19 curtailed our volunteer program for much of 2021, but we are back in business now and want to thank those who have turned out this holiday season to lend a hand. In 2022, we want to use our volunteers more to interact with the folks who drop by for lunch.

The people who cross our doors for lunch get a good meal. They also need to see smiles and hear friendly hellos. That’s where volunteers can fill a gap by providing warmth and energy. May each of you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!

Current Needs

- Turkeys and hams. Supply-chain issues have hit our food supplies hard. Turkey donations are down significantly this year compared to the past. Any turkeys or hams that can be donated during the Christmas season will be greatly appreciated.

- Towels and wash clothes.

- Soap, detergent and basic hygiene supplies.

- Cold weather jackets, gloves, caps, socks, blankets.

- Non-perishable foods and canned goods. Our overall food supplies are down significantly. Please consider a basic food donation of canned goods and general non-perishable foods. Every bit helps. We typically use the food donated during the Christmas season to feed our folks not only at Christmas, but well into the new year. As things stand right now, we will enter 2022 in a food deficit mode.

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