

THE CROSSING

RENO-SPARKS GOSPEL MISSION, INC
Sharing and Caring in Northern Nevada since 1963

EASTER ISSUE 2010

I thought alcohol would loosen me up.
*Instead, it put me in its grip
and almost ruined my life.*

My name is Jeanne. The saddest day of my life was when my husband said he didn't want me to see our children until I was sober for one year. I got started with alcohol in high school. I was shy. Alcohol loosened me up. As I grew older and set out on a career, I was somehow able to keep my job as a dental hygienist — even though I often came to work drunk. I had to drink to appear sober. At least that was my twisted thinking at the time.

I would drink beer and wine and then chase them down with vodka. I'd drink to black out. Every day, I dug a hole of despair deeper and deeper. I went to AA, and I spent time with my sponsor. I started working the 12 steps, but I didn't get to step 4. I was in bad shape. Because of my addiction, I lost my family, my car and eventually my job. I didn't know the meaning of the word "happy."

I'm no longer sitting in an endless pit

Then something wonderful happened. I walked through the doors of the Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission. I can hardly believe the changes that are taking place in my life. I can laugh. I have feelings again. I can think clearly. No longer am I sitting at the bottom of an endless pit, trapped and without

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hope. I'd fallen so far away from God. But today, I can say my God and I have never been closer.

I never thought I'd enjoy going to chapel services or doing chores at a Mission. But I'm embracing everything that's offered to me here. I never want to disconnect from my Creator again.

For so long, I didn't think I was worthy of God's love. I know I have a long way to go, but I know I'm making progress. Thank you for your part in my recovery. Your donations mean more to me than you'll ever know. Thank you and Happy Easter.

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Easter Morning



“Bible and Breakfast”

The Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission invites the community to its annual Easter morning “Bible and Breakfast” service beginning at 8 a.m. Sunday, April 4, at the Mission, 355 Record St., Reno.

Join us as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus with a beautiful time of singing and prayer. Following the service, we’ll serve a hearty breakfast of eggs, bacon and pancakes to all in attendance.

Singles, couples and families are invited to attend this free event.

For details about the Easter service and meal, call 775-329-0485.



An Encouraging Word from Rick Redding



In Bible times the shepherd not only tended his sheep, but he also spent the night with them. In fact, in place of a door, the shepherd slept on the ground at the entrance to the sheepfold. What better protection could the sheep have from animals of prey?

Well, here at the Mission we don’t have literal sheep and we’re not literally shepherds, but this is exactly what our staff does every day. We eat with our guests. We sleep nearby. We know their pain, and we hear their cries. *It’s what shepherds do.* In fact, because we’re so close to the “sheep” we even start smelling like them. Incorporated in 1963, the Mission’s first years of existence were spent sharing quarters with guests of the Mizpah Hotel on Second and Lake Streets. It was cramped and yet ever-expanding. Today that vision for the needy has provided food, shelter and hope for upwards of 200,000 people since the Mission opened its doors.

“One of our residents recently went into a public restroom in town where she saw a needle with heroin still in it. This former addict stood there for 10 minutes, holding that needle in her hand.”

Dead people walking are finding new life in Christ

Now it will soon be Easter. During these days when we focus on the resurrection of our Lord, we’ll continue to see *dead people walking* come through our doors. They’re dead spiritually, mentally and emotionally. Some are close to being dead physically.

Each day we see prodigal sons and daughters return to the Father. The dead find life; the lost are found. Just as Jesus brought people back to life, so does the Holy Spirit breathe life into those who come to our doors.

The other day a woman came up to me and gave me a huge bear hug — thanking the Mission for giving her back her son. A father wept uncontrollably as he held my hand in gratitude, saying his daughter had now been reunited with the family.

This is what Easter is all about. God still moves in the hearts of people who want to be refreshed and renewed. Thank you for your continued support of this ministry of rescue. Our entire staff wishes you a joyous Easter. He is risen... He is risen, indeed.

Your servant,

Rick Redding, Executive Director

An Easter Greeting...with a heartfelt thanks

Pat Kelley, a major league outfielder in the ‘70s, was a committed Christian. One day Pat said to his manager Earl Weaver, “Aren’t you glad I walk with the Lord, Earl?” Earl replied, “Pat, let me tell you. I’d rather you walked with the bases loaded.”

Perspective. It’s all about one’s point of view. It’s what’s important to the individual that makes the difference. One person’s commitment may not be the same as another’s — and that’s what we often see at the Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission. Not all our guests understand what awaits them when they enter our doors. Many come for a hot meal and a warm bed. And that’s a good start. But as important as it is to meet a person’s physical needs, we would be remiss if we did not concern ourselves with their walk with the Lord.



If you want to know what pure hell is like, *just look at my past*

My name is Norman. Believe it or not, to get high I would drink rubbing alcohol every day. Vodka couldn't get me drunk anymore, so I went the cheap route. Don't ask me how I survived, because I don't have the answer. I just know I lived for the devil most of my life. I liked the partying, the lifestyle, the drugs — and eventually the rubbing alcohol. How far could a person get from God!

I flirted with disaster every day. It's a miracle I survived. I drank, smoked and fought. Over and over my family tried to help me, but I was hell-bent on doing things my own wicked way. I dropped out of school in the fifth grade. As a result, I neither read nor write in English or Spanish.

But here at the Mission, I'm slowly learning how to read the Bible. If God can change a person like me, He can change anyone.

I'm not ready to leave the Mission yet

Someone asked me when I would be ready to leave the Mission. I said, *not now. Maybe three years from now.* I'm scared to death to go out there for fear of what I might do. I'm not strong enough yet. But I know with God on my side, one day He will give me the strength I need to make it out there.

"Believe it or not, to get high I would drink rubbing alcohol every day. Vodka couldn't get me drunk anymore, so I went the cheap route."



But let me say a word to you who donate to the Mission — and this comes straight from my heart. *I would give my life for you because of what you've done for me.* You

introduced me to Jesus. Because of your donations, I'm clean and sober. I no longer engage in illegal activity. I don't have enough words to express my thanks.

I've finally found freedom in Jesus Christ. If it weren't for you, the Mission and the staff, I would not be here today. If you're a young person reading this, take it from me: stay in school; don't smoke pot or do meth. If you do, you will have a hell on earth. Go Jesus' way and He will give you a life worth living. God bless you.

Staff Directory

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Rick Redding, MA, MFT
775-323-0386, Ext. 11
rick@rsgm.org

CHAPLAIN
Gerald van der Wende
775-329-0698
gerry@rsgm.org

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT
Luis Santoni
775-323-0386, Ext. 14
luis@rsgm.org

**MEN'S SERVICES/
OPERATIONS MANAGER**
Todd Smith
775-323-0386, Ext. 18
todd@rsgm.org

**WOMEN'S SERVICES/
RECEPTIONIST**
Tammy Treadwell
775-323-0386, Ext. 10
tammyt@rsgm.org

RECORD STREET FACILITY
355 Record St.
Reno, NV 89512
775-329-0485 (24-hour)

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
2115 Timber Way
Reno, NV 89512
775-323-0386
info@rsgm.org

DONATIONS/PICK UP
775-323-7999
dispatch@rsgm.org

for your support throughout the past year

"... our Mission remains the same: to provide a safe haven where people who are homeless and want help can be rescued."

You are the lifeblood of the Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission

The good news is that your prayers, influence and financial support provide us with the opportunity to minister to the whole person — body, soul and spirit.

It's not headline news that 2009 was a tough year for all of us. But because you stood by us during those difficult months, we made it. And because the Mission made it, so did hundreds of men and women who otherwise might have just been walking the bases *instead of walking with the Lord.*

To keep on reaching out to people in physical and spiritual need with a gift, please use the form enclosed or call us at **775-323-0386**. You may also donate on our secure website **www.rsgm.org**. Thank you for being a friend to the poor and needy in Reno-Sparks during the Easter season and throughout the year.

Holiday Wrap Up

The holiday season was a busy one for the staff and volunteers of the Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission.

We served nearly 218,000 meals!

Among the highlights:

- More than **20,000 hot meals** were served between Thanksgiving and Christmas
- About **1,500 jackets** (including 1,000 new ones) were given to adults and children
- **300 families** received full turkey meals and sides as part of the Mission's "Random Acts of Kindness" events
- **Hundreds of blankets, gloves, scarves, hats and other accessories** were given to the poor and homeless

For the entire year of 2009, the Mission:

- **Served nearly 218,000 meals** (up from 175,000 in 2008)
- Gave direct **food assistance to 8,094 people** (up from 2,675 in 2008)
- **Supplied 5,865 bags of food** to outside agencies (up from 1,548 in 2008)

You make it all possible! Thank you!



Winter Coats

The Mission gave away more than 1,500 winter coats during the holiday season, including 500 new jackets to the Children's Cabinet of Reno for at-risk children and those from low-income families.

"They work with children whose families might not have the means for a new jacket," said Rick Redding, Mission executive director. "It gets cold here during the winter and we want to make sure every kid stays warm."

The giveaway was part of the national campaign One Warm Coat, which worked with 120 agencies across the U.S. to distribute 100,000 new coats donated by Aeropostale, Inc. Since its inception, more than 1 million coats have been collected and distributed through One Warm Coat activities.

The Mission, which received 1,000 of the coats, gave the rest at its Thanksgiving and Christmas day events. The Mission also gave more than 500 other winter coats to adults during the same time.

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My Easter Gift

YES, Rick, I want to show my compassion to those who need hope and healing.

- Please bill my credit card (please print):
 VISA MC

Here's my Easter gift of:

- \$20.50 to provide **10 meals** and other assistance
- \$30.75 to provide **15 meals** and other assistance
- \$61.50 to provide **30 meals** and other assistance
- \$_____ to provide **as many meals and as much care as possible**

ACCOUNT NO. _____ EXP. DATE _____
 NAME _____ SIGNATURE _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY / STATE / ZIP _____
 EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission, Inc.
 P.O. Box 5956
 Reno, NV 89513-5956

Please use this completed form and return it with your Easter donation, or donate online at www.rsgm.org. Your gift is tax deductible as allowed by law. You will receive a receipt.