



## *When Love Went the Distance*

*For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. - John 6:38*

I was a young Army musician on Christmas leave and the only thing I could think of was spending time with a certain young nursing student. It was also a classic nor'easter that had dumped two feet of snow overnight snarling traffic, backing up flights and ruining plans. There were no cell phones and lines were down all over the city. My plane was one of the few that had not been redirected to another airport but it was anything but on time. When Kathy and her family went to bed the night before they despaired of seeing my face. "I'll call if I make it and you can pick me up," I had assured her, but when I landed in the very early hours the next morning, there was no phone service and no cab or bus service.

This could have been a problem but for one thing- I was in love. What did it matter that the airport was on the other side of a town buried in heavy, wet snow and I was carrying a suitcase on an empty stomach? I didn't even consider it.

Hours later I dragged myself to her door and was welcomed by her sisters but there was no Kathy. She had stayed up all night in case I called and was still asleep. When she heard me, she flew out of bed, ran down the stairs in an old flannel nightgown with pink foam curlers bouncing around her head and threw her arms around me, crushing the air out of me. What a welcome I got!. I knew I was in the right place and that every cold mile had been worth it. Love has a way of turning sacrifice into joy. Fifty years later I still get a bearhug when I come home.

Jesus didn't just cross town for us, He crossed Eternity and He did that after laying aside His almighty power and taking on the shape of the most defenseless of the human race, a baby. Even the wisest among us and those with the most vivid imaginations cannot fathom that

journey but we know one important fact, it was motivated by love. Love in its purest, most sacrificial and selfless form. Love that got on with it and got it done. There were millions He loved even more ardently than one soldier who loved his girl. No distance was too great for our humble sovereign.

Christ is still closing the distance on those who need His love, even some who are not actively looking for Him. There are men and women who just want a bed and a meal when they come to us but that is not the level of service the tender Son of God has in mind. He has prepared a banquet in the presence of their enemies and has said a blessing over the oil of gladness. How He has looked for and longed for them!

We are privileged to be the innkeepers in this story. It is an honor to prepare room for those who are beloved, who will be forever changed when Christ closes the distance between the lost and His Father. We do not do this alone. You have made every bed, every Bible, every bowl of soup possible as the Mission lives out the story of crèche to Calvary every day.

Christmas will be full of blessings here on Tudor Road. We will do whatever we can to counteract the seasonal depression some experience between Christmas and the New Year. Loneliness is felt more keenly at this time of year. There will be good meals, clean beds, gifts, warm clothes and lots of encouragement. There will also be amazing grace and salvation available to whosoever will.

Please keep us in your prayers that we get it right and do the work God prepared for us from all Eternity. If you are able to help us meet our financial obligations, we will steward your contributions wisely and invest them in a truly New Year for those in need.

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You mean the world to those of us here at the Mission. May the radiant and real spirit of Christmas show up at your door in the person of the bringer of peace, the lover of your soul whose name is Wonderful. May the New Year be the breath of fresh air we all need, filled with faith and fruit.

There is a bearhug that comes with this letter. May you feel it throughout the holidays.

Merry Christmas. Happy New Year to you and to all those you love.

**Pastor John LaMantia**

## *A Peek Inside of the Miracle*



I got to put on a hard hat and take a look at the progress on the kitchen upgrade. The spacious feel of the new area was wonderful. It felt like being in church. That may be because I am a minister and not a chef! I like to think both elements are being fashioned into the work, the practical and the spiritual.

## *Celebrating Larry*

We celebrated a delayed Addiction Professionals Day with bagels. Larry Aldrich, our LifeSkills Program Manager, has been in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, at the CityGate Network District Conference learning more about trauma and mental health in addiction. He also obtained his Adult Mental Health First Aid certificate. We appreciate Larry and value his service to the clients at the Mission.



## *December Memorials*



*Ever bright and never dim, our love for those who rest in Him.*

Memorial for: Rachele Timog  
by: Eve T Heavner

Memorial for: Michael W. Knowlton Marsh  
by: Duane & Neva Marsh

Memorial for: R. W. (Bill) Miller  
by: Rebecca M. Miller

Memorial for Wes Egeler  
by: Charles & Jean Lamb

Memorial for: Wilda Dix  
by: Kelly Christenson

Memorial for: Opal Allnutt  
by: Kelly Christenson

Memorial for: Jill Jourdan  
by: John & Kathy LaMantia

## *Make Gratitude Your Tradition*



I am asking the Lord to encourage in me a grateful heart this holiday season. To make gratitude *my tradition*, my way of life. To cause me to remember every kindness, every favor, every mercy, every generous act ever done to me. To reach for the wonders He and others have cast into my life. To allow them to adorn my life and brighten my holiday and to be as gifts opened for the first time.

Gratitude is expansive. It always overwhelms its less desirable neighbors. It cultivates and plants and produces fruit. It makes room for God-stuff. Gratitude, affection, remembrance. These are the wise-hearted Magi gifts I lay at His feet and receive back as grace upon my own life. (From Kat Calling Shotgun, A Tradition of Gratitude)



Thank you to one of our donors who purchased 4+ cases of body wash for men and women in honor of the one-year anniversary of the homegoing of a friend. People will enjoy these and a dear woman will be honored. The Lord's loving-kindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. ~ Lamentations 3:22-23



## *We Welcome Tours*

Really enjoyed touring the Mission with this wonderful group of folks. From L-R Liliana of Faith Christian community, Chelsea Pohland, Anchorage business woman, Laverne, Annette, Patty of Scenic Park Bible Church. Not shown is Steve, also of Faith Christian Community. It means a great deal to me to be able to show our neighbors how we meet the needs of our guests.



## *Where I Fell, God Planted a Seed*



In 2019, when I was charged with my second DUI, I found the Mission Beauty in Grace Program. However, soon after the completion of my mandated Alcohol Safety Action Program requirements, I fell back into my addictions. Nonetheless, right where I fell is where God planted His seed in my life.

I came to a point of desperation when I found myself homeless and deep in addiction again in May of this year. There was room for me here at the Mission. Since rejoining the program, I have started working towards completing my GED and have been working in the kitchen and doing art. I have been able to lift others up by showing them that God does really work miracles. I have purpose and a new hope because of the Beauty in Grace Program through the Anchorage Gospel Rescue Mission.

Laura Setuk

## *Sharing Christmas*

We will once again be sharing Christmas with our guests and those in our program via a special Christmas Eve Blessing. We will be making sure that everyone receives a Christmas bag. You are welcome to donate if you or your group would like to help. Gift bag suggestions are: knit hats, gloves, socks, candy, nuts, lotion, phone chargers, earbuds, gift cards. If there are gender specific items in the bag put a note on the outside. We will also have a meal for all who wish to share it with us. Ham, green beans, mushroom soup, toasted onions, mashed potatoes and pies of any kind are welcome and would be needed by 12/21. Thank you.



## *To God Be the Glory*

I was honored to be invited by the congregation of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church to share with them what services the Rescue Mission has to offer and how important the Gospel message is to our ministry. I was also grateful to Pastor Lon Elliott and Scenic Park Bible Church for inviting me to play and bring a message. Always a pleasure to worship among the faithful.

## *God Opened a Door*



I just celebrated the two-year anniversary of my graduation from the LifeSkills program. What I have experienced at the Anchorage Gospel Rescue Mission is God's community in action. It amazes me to see the amount of community involvement this mission receives on a daily basis, all with the blessing of God.

It is often the case that when we run low of supplies, (from clothing to cleaning supplies and everything in between) they just seem to show up out of nowhere. (Luke 6:38)

I have been blessed with God's open door to be part of the staff here at the Mission (Rom. 12:4-5) these past two years where I get to witness God in action and practice His principles (John 15:12).

When I had lost all hope in my life, the doors to the Mission opened for me to walk through (John 10:9). God used this place to not only save my physical life but also to give me eternal life (Rev. 3:21). What a wonderful opportunity these open doors offer to anyone in our community- God's community. I am forever grateful.

Russell Adams

The Anchorage Gospel Rescue Mission makes every effort to honor the wishes of our donors who have directed contributions to a specific area. We do, however, reserve the right to redirect the monies received over and above a specific need, into whatever areas they may best be useful.



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**Nightly Services 7:30PM - 8:30 PM**

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### *With Humble Thanks*



On December 5<sup>th</sup> I will be celebrating my 10th anniversary at the Mission. **What a privileged journey to walk beside people Christ has called.** What a joy it is when people answer, to see what grace can do in the lives of all of us second-chancers and watch when hope anchors a soul. From the little victories, like finding someone dry socks, to the life-altering victories that rewrite the stories of entire families, Christ thrills me.

To our wonderful staff, our Board, our many partners, churches, sister non-profits and the community at large, thank you. Thank you for being the wind at my back. Thank you to our Savior for the inspiration and imagination He offers when we need answers.

May His bountiful grace continue to inform the work we do here that we may respond with reciprocal generosity. May God bless the Anchorage Gospel Rescue Mission and all who seek us out.

With humble gratitude,  
*Pastor John LaMantia*

"I just wanna speak the name of Jesus until every dark addiction starts to break, declaring there is hope and there is freedom. Over fear and all anxiety, over every soul held captive by depression, Your name is power, Your name is healing, Your name is life. I speak Jesus."  
*I Speak Jesus, Charity Gayle*