

REAL CHANGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF REDWOOD GOSPEL MISSION

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SEPTEMBER 2023



The Beauty of Jesus Math

In Jesus math, $2 + 2$ doesn't always equal 4. And that's the beauty of it. Instead of always being logical, there's room for miracles.

"I mean, it doesn't make any sense why I'm still alive now," Michael says. "Obviously God had bigger plans for me. I like to call it Jesus math. It doesn't add up that I am still here through all the accidents and the surgeries and just close calls with death that I have had."

Logically, He Shouldn't be Alive

Michael been drinking and using drugs for so long that he didn't really know how to function without them – even though he wanted to get clean.

"I was always trying to do it on my own. I was tired of being miserable on the streets and wanting, feeling like I would rather die than move forward."

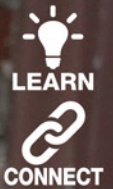
Thankfully, he heard about the Mission.

"It was a safe place to be, it was a warm meal. It was a place you could shower and get clean and (Continued inside...)"

"Thanksgiving at the Mission was the first Thanksgiving that I was able to even celebrate in years." – Michael



Get involved at rmission.org/fall



The Beauty of Jesus Math

(Continued from cover)

After he graduated, Michael went back working in the restaurant industry. But when we needed a catering manager, we decided to ask if he'd be interested in the job. He said, "Yes!" before the question was even out of Jeff's mouth!

have a bed. I wasn't even aware there was a program when I got there.

"It wasn't until I came to the Mission, and I added God to the equation that things changed," Michael says. "I went from being homeless and trying to drink myself to death to being genuinely happy. I don't even recognize the person that I was going in. Because I'm not that person. It's literally a new creation has come out of that."

One thing about Michael that hasn't changed is his love of cooking.

"My first job was dishwashing for Guy Fieri at Johnny Garlic's," he says. "I got into cooking when I turned 16 and legally could handle food. And I worked for Guy for a couple years and got the basics of cooking. And then I went into fine dining."



*"Using my talents and knowledge and the gifts God gave me to help people and give back is so much more gratifying than just cooking for people in restaurants."
– Michael*

A Life-Changing Thanksgiving

Michael first came to the Mission right before Thanksgiving, and when we learned about his culinary background, we asked if he'd help cook for the holiday.

"It was really the first time I had a Thanksgiving and a purpose in it," he says. "So I was able to cook and give back. It felt good."

A week after that Thanksgiving, Michael joined the New Life Program.

"I don't know where I'd be at without the Mission. . . I don't have the words to express how grateful I am for what they've done."

This Thanksgiving he's three years sober, off the streets, married, walking with Jesus and working here at the Mission, helping us feed 4,000 people all on one day – plus hundreds every day before Thanksgiving and after, too.

Feed a Neighbor in need and change a life!
Each \$2.02 you give helps to provide one meal.



My Absolute Favorite Holiday

Jeff Gilman
Executive Director

Even as a child – literally from my earliest memories – Thanksgiving has been my absolute favorite holiday.

I think it's safe to say it always will be.

The thing I love the most about it is that it's not commercialized the way that other holidays like Easter and Christmas have become. It's simple. It's centered around food, family and giving thanks to God for His love and goodness.

At Thanksgiving, instead of thinking about what they will get, people think about how to give back out of all that they've been given. It's a holiday that isn't about individuals but about community, and I absolutely love how our community comes together to serve those in need in such profound ways at our Great Thanksgiving Banquet. Even writing about it now makes me excited. I can hardly wait to see how God uses you this year!

I don't think there's anything more powerful than feeding people in a way that helps them meet Jesus and experience real change. I'm so grateful you and I get to do that together.



The Great Thanksgiving Turkey Smoke



"You're going to get back way more than you're giving. And that will impact you not just for that moment, but I think in the rest of your life. I mean even if you do it once, you're going to be hooked."

**– Brian Daly,
Guy Fieri Foundation**

We've been doing the Great Thanksgiving Banquet since 1995. And up until a few years ago, we always had to start cooking turkeys months in advance.

Then we started partnering with the Guy Fieri Foundation and local BBQ Companies and launched what we now call the Great Thanksgiving Turkey Smoke. Guy and his team donate their time and talent – and smokers – and we cook all the birds the Saturday before our Banquet.

"Thanksgiving is one of the most important meals, I think, of the year," Brian Daly, Executive Director for the Foundation, says. "This event has become a great tradition. Seeing the joy of these families getting that meal that they might not otherwise have had has really made an impact . . . our continued partnership is something that I look forward to every year."

Giving back is something that never gets old and making that a top priority is what the Mission and the Foundation both have in common.

"One of the greatest ways to get to somebody, or to help is through food—you've got to have the feeling of giving back – everybody should be doing this," Guy says.

We'd love to have you join us. Volunteer opportunities will be online on Wednesday, October 18th by 10 AM at srmission.org/gtb. But fair warning, if you're a fan of smoked meat, the smell will have your mouth watering the whole time!



Michael used to work with Guy before his life went off the rails. At the Smoke, they were able to reconnect. Guy remembered him and was thrilled to see how well he's doing now. Pictured from left: Guy Fieri, Michael, Paul Haddorff (Food Services Director, RGM), Brian Daly (Executive Director, Guy Fieri Foundation).

The Great Thanksgiving Banquet



Together We Can Feed 4,000!

When: Wednesday, November 22nd.
Where: Sonoma County Fairgrounds

The Great Thanksgiving Banquet, where we all come together to feed 4,000 of Sonoma County's neediest people, is the Mission's biggest event of the year. That means it's one of the best opportunities we have to share God's love with people in desperate need.

We'll be partnering with friends like you as well as local churches and community members to provide delicious holiday meals, dental and medical care, haircuts, a winter coat giveaway, children's activities, face-painting, a Gospel message and more!

We'd love to have you be a part of it by giving a gift to provide meals, volunteering for the event, donating a turkey, praying, coming to the Turkey Smoke, and signing and returning your Coat Tags.



Redwood Gospel Coffee: More than a Drink



Many people think that coffee is just a drink. A way to wake up in the morning.

But here at the Redwood Gospel Mission, we know that it can be way more than that. That's why we started Redwood Gospel Coffee in 2016.

We believe that coffee is more than a drink; it's a reason to gather, it's a worldwide commodity, it's an industry and it's a vessel for transformation.

Our coffee ministry transforms lives in two ways:

First, our coffee is roasted through our Coffee Certification Program, where men and women are taught to roast coffee as an employable skill.



Secondly, our raw coffee beans come from direct trade relationships with farmers, ensuring they get a fair price. Every step from bean to brew is focused on changing lives.

"I love how, at the Mission, we take things that are a simple part of daily life, like coffee and meals, and use them to share God's love and transform lives," Max, Redwood Gospel Coffee Co. Manager, says.

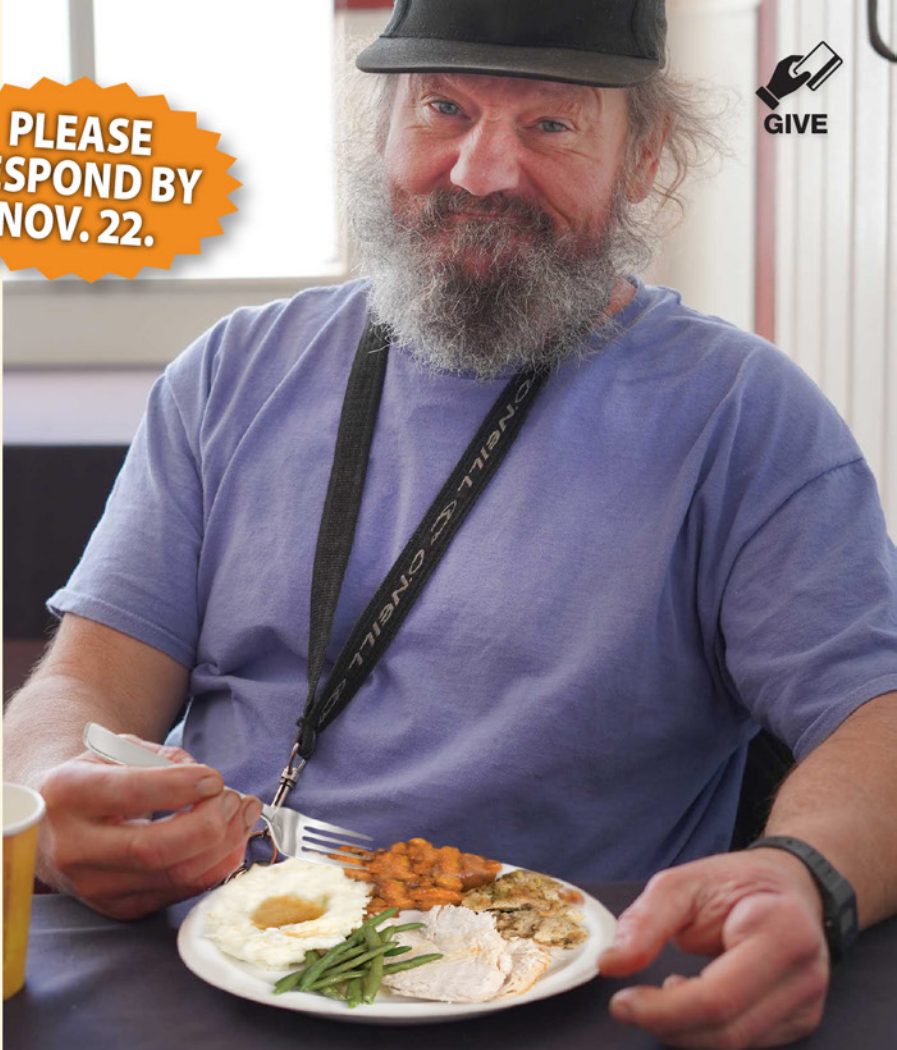
"I've lost count of how many people have gone through the program and have had their lives impacted. And that's not even counting all the farmers we get to partner with and bless. Plus, it's some of the best coffee you'll ever drink."

You can learn more about Redwood Gospel Coffee – and order some to brew at home – at: redwoodgospelcoffee.com



Every Meal Matters!

PLEASE RESPOND BY NOV. 22.



One thing Michael remembers about the first Great Thanksgiving Banquet he cooked was how much food we needed.

"I was constantly refilling it," he says.

When you give a gift today, you can help make sure that there's plenty for everyone. Just \$2.02 is enough to provide one meal.

Because the Mission is 100% donation run, every meal you give really does matter.

"Not only does it give people on the streets a good meal, it gives them a sense of family and a place to be," Michael says. "It not only changes lives, it saves them."

Why? Because it's a demonstration of God's love. And that changes lives today and saves them for all eternity.

Let's come together to reach as many of our poor and needy neighbors as we can this Thanksgiving!

Just \$2.02 is enough to feed one person!

Thanksgiving is the Mission's biggest meal of the year. That means we have the opportunity to share God's love with a lot of people.

Give \$2.02 Meals!

Yes, Jeff! I will help provide meals for my poor and needy neighbors!

I'm sending a gift of:

- \$_____ to help as much as possible.
- My signed coat tags are also enclosed.
- I'd like to volunteer.

Contact me at _____

Name _____
Address _____
City, State ZIP _____

A key partner gift of \$2.02 helps provide 100 meals!

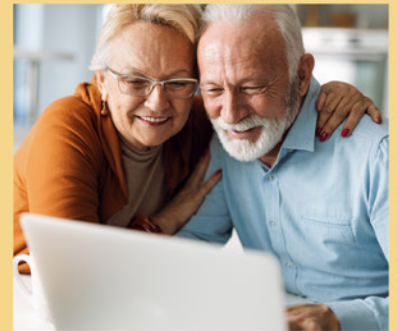


Going by credit card? Fill out the back of this form, or use paypal and processing by donating securely online at www.srmission.org/fall

When you send your gift, please include your signed Coat Tags! You can also give securely online at srmission.org/fall

Let Your Passion Live On

It can be hard to think about what life will look like after you're gone, but you can make sure that your passion for helping others continues! By naming ministries in your will that you are passionate about – like Redwood Gospel Mission – you can know that you'll continue changing lives.



For more information on legacy giving, contact Jeff Gilman at 707.578.1830.



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