

REAL CHANGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF REDWOOD GOSPEL MISSION

DECEMBER 2021



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15 Sober Christmases ... and Counting

*"Before the Mission, I felt lost and hopeless."
— Scott*

Before coming to the Mission, Scott spent several Christmases, Thanksgivings and birthdays all alone. But his story starts earlier, when he was barely a teenager.

"I was probably drinking and using from when I was about 13 years old," he says. "It started out as a fun time, going to parties and so on and then things got worse over the years. Eventually I was just totally dysfunctional."

Scott had been to the Mission before, and the seeds of faith had been planted, but he walked away. Then he ended up in jail.

The Best Prayer Anyone Can Pray

"I got on my knees, and I prayed in my jail cell, and I just said, 'Lord, I can't go on my own power now. I need your help. I'm done. I'm following you now.'"

After surrendering his life to Christ, Scott wrote to the Mission and asked if he could come back and join the New Life Recovery Program. Thanks to the generosity of faithful friends like you, we were able to say yes.

(Continued inside ...)



Get involved at srmission.org/joy

15 Sober Christmases . . . and Counting



(Continued from cover)

"I came back to the Mission on December 19, 2006, and that was my last drink/drug date," Scott says.

That Christmas was his first sober one in decades. He wasn't high and he wasn't alone.

"The Mission for me was a safe place to experience my brokenness with other people and start practicing relying on God and living out some of the principles I was learning."

We Weren't Designed to Live this Life Alone

Scott needed that practice because his addiction had destroyed nearly every relationship he had. In fact, lack of relationships is one of the biggest – if not the biggest – drivers of homelessness and addiction. That's why we focus so much on relationships. First with Jesus Christ, and then others.

"It worked for me, very well, to step back into life with this new foundation for life," Scott says. "I have a circle of people the Mission encouraged me to develop relationships for recovery and spiritual guidance with. Those people are still in my life."

From Isolated to Deeply Connected

Fifteen years after spending that first Christmas with us, Scott is still sober. He has a good job, great friends, a loving church community where he serves on the worship team, and he still talks to his sponsor and mentor from the Mission regularly.

The icing on the cake is that he has a wonderful wife, Tiffany. You can find out more about her and their family on the next page.

"We donate to the Mission, and I work with guys in a mentoring capacity. God willing, I want to continue that for the rest of my life and help give back," Scott says.

**Each \$18.55 you give
this Christmas can help
someone like Scott
begin a new life!**



Christmas Was Cancelled



Jeff Gilman
Executive Director

As we get ready for this Christmas, I can't help but think about last Christmas.

I had plans to gather with my children and grandchildren, my dad, my sister and my brother and their kids, and I was excited about those plans. I anticipated the joy I'd feel when we were together.

Then, because of the pandemic, Christmas was essentially cancelled. All that anticipation turned to disappointment as I cancelled my plans. I didn't see any of the family we'd hoped to see. You may have experienced it, too. It seems like the whole world did.

And yet, as I've thought about how hard that was, I've realized something. The homeless men and women who come to the Mission don't even get the anticipation. Homelessness is so much about lack of relationship that by the time people make it to the Mission, they've lost every relationship that has ever mattered.

That's why the Mission is so focused on not just being a family – of which you are a part – but also restoring families. When God restores relationships, families are reunited. Birthdays, Thanksgiving and Christmas get to be celebrated in person again. That's the goal I have for every one of our guests, and it happens. Often. And it happens through the prayers and support of people like you.

So, as you feel the joy and anticipation of getting to be with your family in person this year, I encourage you to say a prayer for those who are still separated from their families. For them, Christmas with their family is still cancelled. Let's pray that next year, it won't be.



Healthy Relationships Change Everything



Meet Tiffany, Scott's Wife and Dedicated Mission Volunteer.

Scott remembers Tiffany coming to the Mission with her church and leading worship during chapel service. She doesn't remember him. But she does remember the first time she spoke to Scott – at a Bible study that Randy, one of the Mission's other graduates, invited him to. They took things slow at first, but as they grew in their love for Christ, they grew in their love for each other and eventually got married.

Today, Tiffany, who volunteers in the Mission's Food Pantry, is at the Mission even more frequently than Scott is.

Tiffany says, "It is so rewarding. Do it!"

You see, sometimes we get so much food donated that we can't use it all, but there's no way we would ever waste it with so many people in need. That's where Tiffany comes in. She started coming to get extra food so she could take it to families in the community.

"It must have been 11 or 12 years ago I started doing that," she says. "And then, it just sort of morphed into me volunteering and giving away food to like 20 families once a week... It's a huge blessing."



Scott and Tiffany have been married for 12 years. They have three children together and Scott has a daughter from a previous relationship.

But not only is it a blessing to the families who get to enjoy the food, it's a blessing to Tiffany.

"I think that it transforms the program members, but it transforms the people that are involved in it, too. It's a place where you grow, and so that experience has been awesome... I'm a huge fan of the Mission. It's amazing," Tiffany says. "I don't know what else to say. Everybody should give money to the Mission. And volunteer."

If you've been thinking of volunteering, the Christmas season is a great time to jump in!

To get find out more about volunteering or to sign up, contact Tiffany Harvey at 707.578.1830 x 314.



Adopt a Stocking

Even though we don't know exactly what Christmas will look like this year, we know that no matter what, we will make Christmas a special day for everyone staying with us.

As part of the celebration, we want to make sure that every one of our overnight guests and recovery program participants gets their very own stocking, and you can help!

Can you imagine the joy on someone's face when they receive your stocking on Christmas morning?

Sign up by contacting:
Mariella Zapata at 707.578.1830 x 306.

Fill a stocking for one of our overnight guests or someone in our recovery program with the following items:

- Socks – men's or women's (crew or ankle)
- Winter gloves (medium and large sizes)
- Beanies
- Nail clippers
- Rain ponchos
- Flashlight or book light
- Optional Life Recovery or Celebrate Recovery Bible
- And either a travel coffee mug or a Santa Rosa CityBus pass
- Instant coffee packets
- Christmas Candy and Candy Canes

World-Wide Impact with Every Sip!



Have you heard about our coffee ministry? It's a great way to enjoy some incredible coffee while having a world-wide impact with every sip!

Our coffee is all direct trade, meaning we build relationships with our coffee farmers and pay them a wage that will both bless them and help them transform their communities. It's roasted on campus, in our state-of-the-art roaster, through our Coffee Certification Program, where men and women in recovery are taught to roast coffee as a skill they can use to enter the work world again as a coffee professional. And our coffee is high-quality, gourmet, specialty coffee, which means it tastes incredible – people like Kim love it so much that they'll go out of their way to get it!

Kim first discovered our coffee at her church and signed up there. *"Seeing something where we would get to support a great cause and being able to get coffee, it just seemed like a perfect situation,"* she says. *"And then we started getting it and it was just really high-quality coffee. It was really good."*

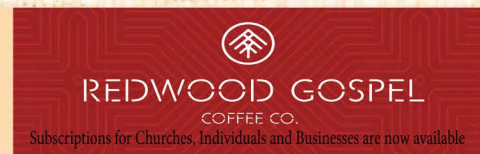
When her church was shut down during the pandemic, she continued her order and drove to the Mission to pick it up herself!

"I love the coffee, so I thought, well, this is a small thing, but I could keep it going."

Now that we're starting coffee delivery to churches again, Kim doesn't have to come to the Mission to get hers, but she thinks she will – at least every once in a while.

"It's nice to see the face behind what you get," she says. *"This is supporting local people that are learning a trade and working hard and making a great product."*

We deliver to churches, ship to your home or you can pick up your coffee. Find out more at: **RedwoodGospelCoffee.com**



Ordering Redwood Gospel Coffee Is Easier Than Ever.

Just in time for Christmas, we launched a new website that makes ordering even easier!

1. Pick your roast, the size of bag (12 or 16 ounces) and the type of grind.
2. Choose your order frequency (one time only, once a month, twice a month or every week).
3. Select your delivery method: Pickup at church or the Mission, or have it shipped to your door.
4. Put in your payment information and you're good to go!

Go to: RedwoodGospelCoffee.com
Perfect for Christmas gifts!

Give THE Best Gift. Give New Life this Christmas!



Scott wouldn't be sober, he wouldn't be married to Tiffany, he wouldn't have a great job, he wouldn't be leading worship at church, he wouldn't been the man he is today – a man who loves Jesus more than anything – if it weren't for the generosity of people like you.

"Thank you," Scott says. "I don't know how words could really speak my gratitude for that."

It's safe to say it's the best gift he's ever gotten, and he hasn't been able to keep it to himself.

That's why he and Tiffany donate to the Mission and spend so much time volunteering. They know that the gift they've gotten – and the Good News of Jesus Christ – is too good not to be shared.

This Christmas, you can give someone else that gift – the gift of a new life walking with Jesus. Each \$18.55 you give provides three delicious meals, a night of safe shelter and essential care for one of your poor and needy neighbors.

The day you give could become the last day that someone like Scott ever spends drunk, high or homeless.



Each \$18.55 you give will help share God's love by providing three hot meals, a night of safe shelter and a day of essential, Christ-centered care. That day could lead to a whole new life for someone like Scott!

Please be sure to send your gift by Dec. 22nd to help in time for Christmas.

Give New Life this Christmas!

Yes, Jeff! I want to share the Good News of Jesus and help my poor and needy neighbors experience new life! I'm sending a leadership Christmas gift of:

☐ \$_____ to help as much as possible.

Name _____
Address _____
City, State ZIP _____

Your gift can provide meals, shelter and Christ-centered care for someone with nowhere else to turn, like Scott.

Getting the credit card? Fill out the back of this form or contact our office at 707.578.1830. We'll be happy to help you get the credit card.

Redwood Gospel Mission is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Your gift is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

You can also give securely online at:
srmission.org/joy

Leave a Legacy of Love

As you make your long-term estate plans and consider the legacy you want to leave, why not pray about remembering Redwood Gospel Mission in your will? Over the years, a number of faithful friends have left gifts to the Mission, and their impact on our poor and needy neighbors is still continuing.

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



REAL CHANGE
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