Dear Friend,

Most of us are probably familiar with these words from the book of Joshua: “...choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve (“choose”) the Lord.” (Joshua 24:15)

On the one hand it is a wonderful privilege to be able to say, "I choose to follow God and His plan." But, on the other, don't you sometimes wish that God made all the difficult choices for us? It seems like that would simplify life in a lot of ways. It would certainly keep us from making poor or devastating choices that would land us in trouble.

God put the plan in motion for us to have the ability to make choices rather than create us as robots. There is no such thing as freedom when there is no ability to choose.

As you will read in this issue of The Light, it is critical in the recovery process for a man or woman to learn to make correct and wise choices and experience the true freedom that comes when they know they have done so. They know very well what has happened too many times in their lives when poor choices have been made, resulting in the inevitable hard consequences.

“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again (don’t choose) to a yoke of slavery.” (Galatians 5:1)

Through your continued generous support, men, women and children at the Mission will learn to make good and godly choices that will free them from their pasts. God bless you.

For His glory,

Rev. Daniel J. Doty
Executive Director

I Had No Idea!

At City Union Mission we truly believe change begins with a transformation of the heart. And it's God's love, grace and guidance that make that miracle possible. That's why—in addition to providing three meals a day, clean clothing and safe shelter—we introduce individuals and families in our care to the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ, and we tend to their spiritual needs in a number of ways . . .

Prayer: Of all the things we do at the Mission, we know the most-important component of our ministry is prayer. Our staff members and volunteers pray fervently for our residents and guests and for the success of their journeys toward stable and fulfilling lives.

Chapel and devotions: Residents and guests at our facilities faithfully attend chapel and/or participate in daily devotions. We do not force Christianity on anyone, but we seek to introduce our residents to a God who loves them and has a special plan for their lives!

Classes: In addition to recovery and basic life-skills classes, we also offer spiritual-development training meant to encourage our residents in their faith walks.

Christ truly is at the center of everything we do at City Union Mission, and we know this is important to those we serve. In fact, a recent study by the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions (AGRM) conducted at their member missions nationwide found 82 percent of mission clients and guests prefer receiving assistance from an organization with a spiritual emphasis. Specifically for City Union Mission, that number reached 84 percent. You gift today allows us to continue sharing His message of hope and new life with homeless and hurting men, women and children.
At age 18, Kevin’s short past could be defined as a series of poor choices—abusing drugs and alcohol, dropping out of school, committing repeated felonies—that landed him in prison. There, he spent much of his time in solitary confinement for belligerence and fighting. “But while I was ‘in the hole,” Kevin says, “God was finally able to talk to me.” A guard gave him a Bible and he started reading.

“Needless to say, once the Lord starts after you, eventually you’re going to have to face yourself. So in that cell, I did. I talked to God and accepted Him as my Lord. He opened my eyes to the fact that I was a lost man at only 18. He also told me in my heart the judge was going to give me probation. I should have gotten 15 years.” Instead, Kevin was “sentenced” to a treatment program and came to City Union Mission’s Opportunity Farm.

“When I first got here I was miserable. I thought, ‘These people have never been anywhere or seen anything and they don’t know where I’ve come from.’ I tried to fight with one of the guys because of something he said. But they taught me to understand compassion. They let you make your choices and trust you are either going to make the right ones or, if you make the wrong ones, they help you. You get to experience freedom here.”

Kevin recently earned his GED, and when he completes the Mission’s Christian Life Program, he hopes to find a construction job because he’s enjoyed similar work he’s done at the Farm. “But the main thing is, I need to stay in church and keep my connection with God or I will fall,” he says with certainty. “I try my best to dedicate my every action to benefit His glory. Every man has been somewhere and seen something. But God rules the hearts of man, and in the end He wins!”

At City Union Mission’s Opportunity Farm, Kevin was given the opportunity to make the right choice—and experience the freedom of living his life for the Lord.

**A Newfound Freedom**

Men like Kevin are often directed to City Union Mission’s Christian Life Program at our Opportunity Farm because the rural location makes it more difficult for them to access their drugs of choice, so they’re not faced with temptations on a daily basis. All residents first go through an interview process to determine their life needs and current legal, medical and mental health conditions to ensure the Farm setting is appropriate for them.

The recovery curriculum for men at the Farm is similar to what is offered through our Christian Life Program at the Mission in Kansas City, including core doctrinal beliefs, educational and life skills, communication and conflict-resolution skills, core employment skills, computer literacy, financial management and fulfilling life responsibilities. At the Farm, we also offer a variety of work-therapy assignments—such as lawn care, housekeeping, all areas of construction and home repair, vehicle maintenance and repair, tractor and chain saw operation—that prepare men for a variety of employment opportunities. In addition fishing, swimming, canoeing, hiking and wildlife watching are activities unique to our location and provide the men peaceful and natural ways to connect with God.

We work very closely with three Warsaw-area churches that take an earnest interest in our residents who attend their worship services. The men enjoy regular activities with the congregations, as well as an occasional softball game and cookout, which help them feel part of a Christian community.

City Union Mission is blessed to have both city and country locations where we can meet the needs of clients with different sets of life issues and challenges. Your gift today will ensure all our facilities continue to be centers of transformation and hope for hundreds of children, women and men like Kevin every year.

**Why an Opportunity Farm?**

City Union Mission’s Opportunity Farm is located on 600 acres of Ozark hills near Warsaw, Missouri.
Did you know nearly 90 percent of America’s wealth is in our “stuff?” As the economy continues to fluctuate—leaving many Mission friends who want to maintain generous levels of support without the funds to do so—we’re encouraging businesses and individuals to consider some creative giving options. For example, maybe your company has unused or surplus products like paper goods, clothing or even furniture. Free up valuable space in your warehouse by donating items like these that the Mission can use on a daily basis. While not direct financial gifts, these contributions provide the same benefit by offsetting our budget so funds that would normally be spent on these goods can be used to touch more lives through our programs and services.

Or perhaps you or your family has an automobile you’re no longer using or collectibles you no longer have a place for. Let the Mission take them off your hands! We’ll sell them for cash and use the proceeds to supplement our donated income.

You see, while $7.8 million dollars may sound like a large budget, it’s much smaller than it would be if people didn’t donate their “stuff”—and now is the perfect time to make that practice an even bigger part of your charitable-giving legacy. For more information, contact Associate Executive Director, Development, Dennis Chapman at dennisc@cityunionmission.org or (816) 754-9992, 1476.

Honeysuckle White turkey products—in conjunction with Cargill and Cosentino’s Price Chopper—donate thousands of pounds of turkeys each year to include in food boxes for the near-homeless and to serve at our holiday dinners.

Mission donors often enjoy directing their financial contributions toward specific items in our budget. Not only does this provide them the satisfaction of envisioning their generosity at work, it gives us peace of mind knowing those needs will be met. Below are giving opportunities for you or your group to provide critical budget relief for one year.

- **Food for “Daily Bread”—$80,000:** Although much of the food used for our meals and pantry distribution is provided by individuals and through donation drives, there are still items we must purchase on a regular basis. A gift of this amount will ensure we can provide nourishment for our residents, guests and the community.
- **Food for Camp—$24,000:** This gift covers food costs for our summer camping program, which helps break the cycle of poverty among children and youths.
- **Food for Vanderberg Youth Center—$1,200:** The Mission provides wholesome snacks for youngsters in our after-school programs, and this donation will fund those nutritious treats.
- **Educational Field Trips for Youth—$200:** This gift will provide outings and other opportunities for children in our after-school youth program to learn about the world around them.
- **1/2-Ton Pickup Truck—$4,500:** A donation of this amount will allow us to purchase a good used vehicle to transport materials and maintain our facilities.

For more information on these and other special giving opportunities, contact Associate Executive Director, Development, Dennis Chapman at dennisc@cityunionmission.org or (816) 754-9992, ext. 1476.
City Union Mission recently received a heartwarming gift from the Hutchinson Correctional Facility (HCF)—115 handmade quilts! Instead of sending the inmates’ worn out denim uniform shirts and pants to the landfill, they are cleaned and sewn together with a filler made from old prison blankets, and the finished product is a warm double-bed size quilt.

According to Connie Lattimer, storekeeper specialist at HCF, the inmates really enjoy making the quilts for the needy and homeless. “It’s been a challenge for those who’ve never sewn before and others have become quite creative,” she says. Over the past three years, the inmates have made approximately 750 quilts, reusing more than 4 1/2 tons of material that would have possibly ended up in a landfill.

“We are very pleased to be involved in support of organizations [like City Union Mission],” says Sam Cline, Warden. “Many of our men have experienced homelessness, hunger and poverty. This is their moment to give back.”

These quilts are currently being enjoyed by guests in the Mission’s Men’s Emergency Shelter who, with the Mission staff, extend a special “thank you” to the inmates at HCF!

Quilts of Hope for the Homeless

Many Hearts and Hands Made the Holidays Bright

Church and business groups and individuals from all across Kansas City collected Christmas gifts for City Union Mission’s Christmas Store, as part of our Mission: Christmas holiday activities. Store shelves were stocked with toys, books and games, clothing for folks of all ages and even small household appliances. Then poverty-stricken families, as well as homeless men and women in our shelters, were allowed the dignity of personally selecting gifts for their loved ones free of charge, during a meaningful Christmas-shopping experience.

The YMCA of Greater Kansas City also supported the Mission’s Christmas Store by placing gift drop-off barrels in all 20 of their metro-area locations, as well as displaying posters that directed members to the Mission’s Web site for information on holiday volunteer opportunities. Radio stations 91.9 Air 1 and 97.3 K-Love promoted Mission: Christmas activities through their online chatter. And 98.1 KUDL chose City Union Mission as one of two partner organizations for that station’s Adopt-a-Family program.

Donations to the Christmas Store enabled the Mission to provide gifts to more families and individuals than ever before—an indication of the growing need and a reflection of our community’s giving spirit. Visit our Web site, www.cityunionmission.org, to learn the actual of number of families and households that were assisted. City Union Mission wishes to thank every person who made Mission: Christmas a success again this year. All the families you allowed us to assist join us in saying, “You are the best!”

Because You Gave November 2010

Financial Update

FY 2011 Budget (Oct. 1 - Sept. 30) $7,864,565
Amount Raised as of 12/20/10 $2,542,856

Daily average of homeless sleeping overnight 1,006
Daily average of meals served 269
Approx. number of patients seen for medical issues 87
Daily average of homeless attending chapel services 814
Approx. number of salvations and rededications 426
You might be surprised that one of the items we run short of most often is new underwear and socks for the men, women and children in our shelters. While the clothing our guests wear on the outside is certainly important, what goes underneath is vital for their comfort and self-esteem! And during the cold winter months, we also use large quantities of over-the-counter medications like ibuprofen, decongestant and alcohol-free cough medicine.

We’d be so blessed if your church or work group would organize donation drives for these items. Perhaps designate an “Undie Sunday” or “Undie Monday,” and ask your congregation or fellow employees to drop off new packaged underwear of all sizes in a designated box or barrel. Or, establish an ongoing “medicine chest,” where over-the-counter medications can be deposited. We’ll welcome your delivery of these items any weekday, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., at the administration building, 1100 E. 11th Street, Kansas City, Missouri.

City Union Mission's fourth annual Women Who’ve Changed the Heart of the City luncheon is scheduled for Wednesday, April 20, at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center. Proceeds from the luncheon benefit the Mission’s Camp CUMCITO, where each summer close to 500 inner-city or impoverished children experience the wonders of nature and the warmth of God’s love in a safe and caring environment.

Since its inception in 2008, the event has recognized more than a dozen outstanding area women whose legacies of leadership and humanitarianism have contributed to the fabric of our city. This year’s honorees include Rose Bryant, Mary Lou Jaramillo, Susan Stanton and Barbara Spilker.

Plan now to join event co-chairs Binny Pearce and Marianne and Dayton Moore—along with Master of Ceremonies Elizabeth Alex, NBC Action News anchor—for this distinguished event, which has become a hallmark of the Mission. For more information—including table sponsorship opportunities, visit www.cityunionmission.org.

You might be surprised that one of the items we run short of most often is new underwear and socks for the men, women and children in our shelters. While the clothing our guests wear on the outside is certainly important, what goes underneath is vital for their comfort and self-esteem! And during the cold winter months, we also use large quantities of over-the-counter medications like ibuprofen, decongestant and alcohol-free cough medicine.

We’d be so blessed if your church or work group would organize donation drives for these items. Perhaps designate an “Undie Sunday” or “Undie Monday,” and ask your congregation or fellow employees to drop off new packaged underwear of all sizes in a designated box or barrel. Or, establish an ongoing “medicine chest,” where over-the-counter medications can be deposited. We’ll welcome your delivery of these items any weekday, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., at the administration building, 1100 E. 11th Street, Kansas City, Missouri.

City Union Mission’s BED & BREAD CLUB has grown to include hundreds of members who pledge to send gifts of $15 or more each month to help provide one day’s worth of food, shelter and care for one or more men, women and children. Some of our Mission friends feel called to be part of this vital group and would like to demonstrate their compassion in a more direct way.

Through our Share a Meal program, individuals, families, churches or other groups can provide food and serve a meal at one our facilities or simply provide the funds to cover the cost of a meal. One lunch or dinner at our Family Center is $200—or $600 at our Men’s Emergency Shelter. The financial component is also used toward overnight shelter and our long-term recovery curriculum. Those who choose to care for the hungry and homeless in this way will also become official members of our BED & BREAD CLUB!

For more information on becoming a member of our BED & BREAD CLUB by pledging an ongoing financial donation or through our Share a Meal program, visit www.cityunionmission.org. We look forward to your partnership!

The Greater Kansas City YMCA has chosen City Union Mission as their partnering charity for 2011 and will place collection barrels at their 20 metro locations to encourage members to collect items the Mission needs to care for the homeless and hungry. They’ll also sponsor service projects, bringing members to the Mission to volunteer their time and talents.

The Mission is deeply grateful for the YMCA coming alongside us and extending their hands so we can extend our hands to men, women and children who are homeless or poor.