



A Publication of CITY UNION MISSION

# THE LIGHT

VOLUME 67 • NO. 2 • 2026 EASTER NEWSLETTER



## Ashanafi's future is **Bright** this **Easter!**

Thank you for  
sharing hope in  
his darkest time.

*Easter*  
2026



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For more information: (816) 474-9380 [cityunionmission.org](http://cityunionmission.org)



A Message from GARETH KEOWN

## A SEASON OF Possibility...

A lot changes this time of year. We're moving into a new season. Days are getting longer, and new life is springing up around us. It's a reminder that even in darkness, beauty and hope are just around the corner.

The Easter season is also a reminder of Christ's sacrifice... and the hope for new life and renewal.

Renewal is happening inside City Union Mission as well – in the lives of the men and women who come to us in their darkest hour. Each person who walks through our doors is a story of resilience and possibility, like Ashanafi, whose story you can read on page 3.

Through the support of friends like you, these men and women can rise above their circumstances and rebuild their lives. Because our recovery program is more than meals, safe shelter and care. It's about finding faith that a new life is possible.

**Thank you for empowering our guests along their journey from darkness to light...** from despair to hope. Your generosity gives them the tools they need to move from the shadows of homelessness or addiction, into the light of stability and hope.

Blessings,

Gareth Keown  
Chief Executive Officer



# A Legacy That Blooms



There's a rich history behind the National Cherry Blossom Festival and the trees at its center, marked by values that span generations. As you read, consider your story and the legacy you'd like to leave behind.

This story begins with **Generosity**. In 1912, Tokyo donated 3,020 trees to Washington, D.C., as a gesture of goodwill to honor the relationship between the United States and Japan. That generosity had its roots in a small group of people who worked to generate interest in Japanese cherry trees by raising money, giving away saplings and advocating with government officials. *What causes are important to you?*

**Relationships** are central to this history. Friendship between Japan and the U.S. motivated the original donation. The trees have continued to be symbols of goodwill over the years. *What relationships have shaped who you are?*

With relationships often comes the need for **Reconciliation**. After World War II, the National Park Service sent budwood from the original trees to Japan to restore the trees in Tokyo. In turn, Japan gave the U.S. a stone lantern as a rededication of friendship. *How has the reconciliation you have through Christ changed your life?*

For the full version of this article, request a FREE copy of "The Gift That Keeps on Blooming" by contacting Sandy Baldwin at (816) 329-1477 or [sandy.baldwin@cityunionmission.org](mailto:sandy.baldwin@cityunionmission.org) – or bless your family today with an up-to-date will at [cityunionmission.legacywill.org](http://cityunionmission.legacywill.org)



## This Easter... EVERY MEAL MATTERS

Just \$2.50 for a meal & hope for a new life!

Each meal served with love at the Mission is so much more than a plate of food. It can also open the door to life-changing services like safe shelter, Christ-centered care and healing in our recovery programs!

**For just \$2.50 each, you can provide a hot, nourishing Easter meal to someone in need... and share hope for a new life in Christ.**

✉ Give now using the enclosed reply card and envelope.

✦ Give online anytime at [cityunionmission.org](http://cityunionmission.org).



“ I feel more  
**Confident**  
in myself. ”



Ashanafi was just 9 years old when his father passed away. From then on, life was filled with uncertainty. “I had little to no guidance on what it meant to become a man. I had to base it on other people’s characters,” he says.

As he got older, Ashanafi struggled with deep loneliness. “I could be in a crowded room and still feel invisible,” he shares.

Feeling lost and without support, he turned to substances. Addiction soon took over his life, leading him down a destructive path and eventually onto the streets. “I realized my habits would lead to death,” he says. That’s when Ashanafi came to City Union Mission.

“Before coming to the Mission, I was pessimistic about my future,” he admits. “Now, I feel more confident in myself and my ability to succeed.”

At the Mission, Ashanafi found spiritual healing and a supportive, Christ-centered community. “In times of despair, there was often a sincere, encouraging word,” he says.

He’s learning practical life skills, like budgeting, and understanding the importance of wise decisions.

Inspired by other program participants’ success and how they live out their faith, Ashanafi wants to give back. “I’ve learned to show others the same grace that I’ve been shown,” he says. “I want to help people who need it.”

Ashanafi also hopes to use his culinary skills to work as a cook while he decides on a technical field that best suits him.

**This Easter, Ashanafi has a new direction for his life. Thank you for lighting the path forward for him to experience a future of hope and peace!** “It’s God’s grace that makes me who I am. As long as I stay humble and seek God, that’s all I’ll ever need in life.”

**“THE MISSION GIVES ME A CHANCE TO GROW AND SEE THAT GROWTH OVER TIME.”**



**May we shine the light of Christ.**

*“In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” — John 1:4–5*



# ASSIST HUNGRY NEIGHBORS THIS EASTER



This Easter, you can turn hunger into hope. Donate much-needed food items and assist in providing thousands of meals for our neighbors in need. Your generosity not only fills plates... but also warms hearts!

Give food. Share hope. Welcome our guests with a nourishing Easter meal and the promise of a brighter tomorrow.

Drop off donations at our Food Warehouse, 1020 E. 10th Street in Kansas City, 5 days a week.

No time to shop? Donate now!

(816) 474-9380 [cityunionmission.org](http://cityunionmission.org)

## URGENTLY NEEDED ITEMS!

Drop off any of these items **by Friday, April 3:**



SPIRAL SLICED HAM



COFFEE

BUTTER

CREAMER

POWDERED MILK

DESSERTS  
(homemade or store-bought)



INSTANT MASHED POTATOES



CANNED VEGETABLES

*Thank you so much for your generosity!*



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**HOTLINE FOR THE HOMELESS**  
**(816) 474-4599**

## FIND *Community* AND *Inspiration* ONLINE!



Discover how the Holy Spirit is moving through your generous support! Visit us online to read powerful stories of lives being transformed through the love of God – and stay informed about upcoming ministry opportunities this Easter season.

Whether you're called to volunteer, give or pray, there are many ways to serve the poor or homeless in Jesus' name.

See how you can share the hope of new life. Visit our website today! [cityunionmission.org](http://cityunionmission.org)

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