

REAL CHANGE

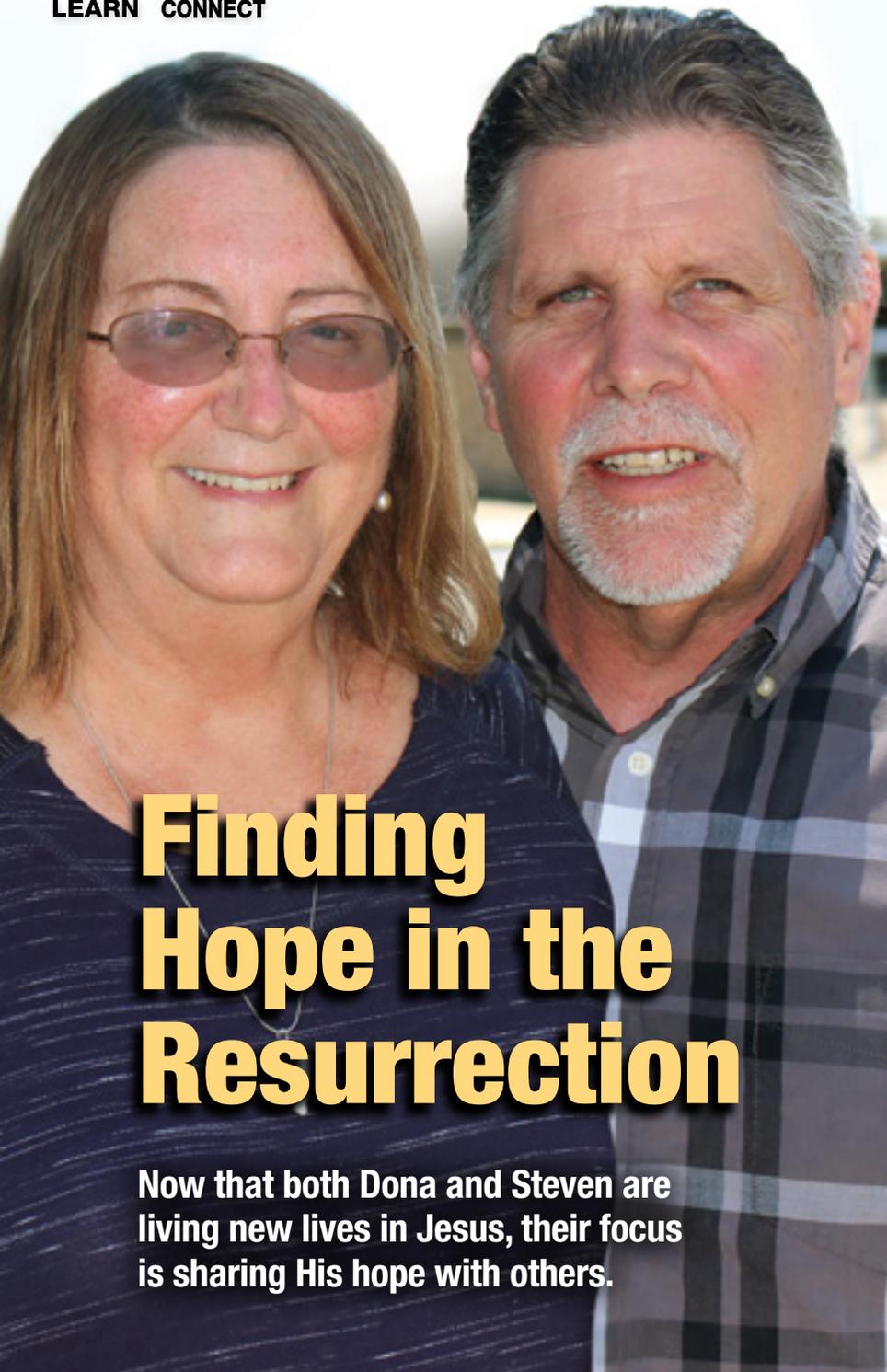
THE NEWSLETTER OF REDWOOD GOSPEL MISSION

MARCH 2020



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Finding Hope in the Resurrection

Now that both Dona and Steven are living new lives in Jesus, their focus is sharing His hope with others.

Steven and Dona didn't even know each other 10 years ago. They also didn't know about the role the Mission would play in their lives.

"I've probably ridden my bike past the Mission, going down Wilson, hundreds of times at least. I just never looked twice over here," Steven says.

But one day, he found himself not just looking twice, but on our doorstep.

Life Seemed Hopeless

"I'd been on the street for like 11 years in Santa Rosa. My addiction totally controlled my life," Steven explains. *"I've slept in bushes. I've slept under a bridge. I've slept behind buildings."*

Eventually, Steven's addiction and lifestyle landed him in jail. When he got out, his parole officer recommended the Mission. Within a few days he had joined the New Life Recovery program. Not long after, he began attending church.

Dona, who leads worship at that church, remembers seeing Steven walk in and sit down. Something about him caught her attention. Even though she hadn't gone through our recovery program herself, she was no stranger to addiction.

(Continued inside ...)



Get involved at srmission.org/newlife

You can share Easter's promise of new life today!

Finding Hope in the Resurrection



(Continued from cover)

"I drank a lot and I did recreational drugs," she says.

Dona knew that real change in Jesus was possible – she'd experienced it. She'd seen her brother, who graduated from the Mission a few years before Steven arrived, experience it. So she prayed that Steven would experience it, too.

Thanks to God's grace and the support of friends like you, he did. When Steven graduated from the New Life Program in 2010, that's exactly what he got – a whole new life – a life walking with Jesus. A life married to Dona after 8 months of dating. A life that's better than he ever imagined.

"God will help you if you let him," she says. "When I heard Jesus ask me to come to him, it just clicked."

New Life Is Contagious

"The men look up to him because he's been there, he's done it," Dona explains. "He's proof of the pudding that you can go through this program. That you can make it."

Both Dona and Steven know that Jesus is the one who changes lives and hearts, so when they got married, they decided that they would do everything they could to share the hope of the resurrection with as many people as possible. Today they do that by helping mentor and lead recovery classes here.



Not only has Dona worked a successful recovery program, she's been healed after having two debilitating strokes. When she teaches, she shares her story as an example of how God can do anything.

Your \$1.79 Easter meal could be the first step towards a new life for people like Dona and Steven!



He Is Risen!

Jeff Gilman
Executive Director



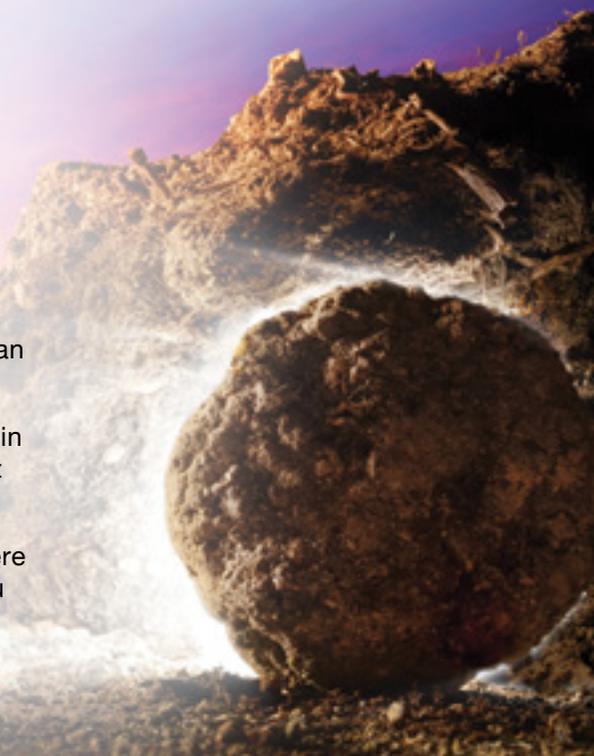
On Easter, Jesus conquered the one thing that everyone thought couldn't be conquered – death.

Not only is that great hope to you and me, it's great hope to our poor and needy neighbors. Often men and women who are homeless, hungry and addicted think that they've reached the end. They wrongly believe that there is no hope, that nothing can change their lives.

That's why Easter is so important. The resurrection shows that in Christ, anything – including new life – is possible because what was once dead is now alive!

That's the hope of Easter, and it's the hope men and women here in Sonoma County desperately need. And it's the hope that you and I have the joy of celebrating and sharing this Easter.

He is risen! He is risen indeed!



“What Did I Get Myself Into?”



When Max decided to volunteer at the Mission, he imagined himself passing out meals or greeting guests — something he considered “easy.”

But when he called to volunteer for the Great Thanksgiving Banquet, the only opening was at the foot-washing station.

“I thought to myself, no way,” he remembers.

Later, while talking to a friend, Max felt convicted about his attitude and agreed to serve. But his hesitation didn't go away. Even as he walked up to the station, he thought to himself, *“What did I get myself into?”*

But as he began to wash the feet of his neighbors in need, his attitude completely changed.

“That's when I realized the homeless are like everybody else. They're just like us.”

Max has been leading the foot washing ministry and serving in a variety of ways for several years. If you've been thinking about volunteering, Max has a recommendation for you:

“Just do something out of your comfort zone. Don't do something “easy.” Push yourself. You'll be rewarded tenfold; just like the Gospel teaches us,” he says.



Prayer Points



- Our Easter Feast is being held outside at Courthouse Square and if it rains, it changes the whole experience — and fewer people come. Please pray for sunny skies and a great turn-out so we can share the hope of the Resurrection with as many people as possible!
- Please also pray for every man, woman and child who will come to our Easter Feast. Pray that they walk away filled with hope and a desire to learn more about Jesus.

Create an Easter Blessing Bag

We're collecting Blessing Bags to hand out at the Easter Feast. You can help by creating them by yourself, as a family or with your church group. These little bags are another way to show our poor and needy neighbors they are loved. The bags also serve as a connection to the Mission so that when someone is ready to change their life, they know where to come for help.

Here's what you do:

Take a 1-gallon size resealable bag or reusable grocery bag and put the following items inside:

- Men's Socks (crew or ankle)
- Movie Ticket (3rd Street Cinemas) or \$5 Gift card of some kind (McDonalds, Starbucks, Dollar Tree, Subway, Taco Bell, Jamba Juice)
- Handwarmers
- Men's Beanie Hat
- Rain Ponchos
- Flashlight with Batteries
- Beef Jerky or Beef Sticks
- Easter Candy

Drop off your filled Blessing Bags by Monday, April 6th at the Ministry Support Office 1821 Piner Road, Santa Rosa, CA

Call for Easter Volunteers



The most generous and wonderful people are part of our community. In fact, during the holiday season, we always have plenty of people volunteering to help serve. But at Easter, so many are busy celebrating with their church families that we don't have as many people offering to help. If you are free on Easter and are willing to help, we'd love to have you! As Max's story shows, you never know what you'll learn or how God will bless you.



If you're ready to sign up, just check that box on your reply from when you send your gift to provide Easter meals.

Contact: David Perez at dperez@smission.org or 707.578.1830 x 317.



Offer Hope and New Life this Easter!

Death is a fact. That's what makes the Gospel such good news. The resurrection is proof of God's power to make alive those who have been dead. That includes those who are heading towards death, those who feel dead in their addictions and those who are dead in their sin.

That's not just good news. It's great news. It's life-changing news. And it's news that you can share with people in desperate need today.

You see, for many of our homeless and hungry neighbors, hope feels impossibly out of reach.

But this Easter, you can help them taste that hope by giving a gift to provide Easter meals. Because we're expecting 400 people, every single meal will make a difference and every single person who gives can have an impact!

Please provide as many \$1.79 Easter meals as you can. Even a single meal can open the door to new life. How many can you give?

To help in time, please send your gift by April 6th. You can also give securely at srmission.org/newlife



REAL CHANGE

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