

# We're expecting a crowd for Thanksgiving!

Will you help us prepare?

Last Thanksgiving Day, we hosted a hybrid event for our Community Dinner. We had a sit-down feast of turkey, dressing and ALL the fixings. We also offered drive-thru meals. This year, we will do the same, making sure everyone who needs a delicious, hearty Thanksgiving dinner can have one!

We will start getting ready the week before and continue until Thanksgiving Day. Many faithful volunteers help everything run smoothly to make this day a success.

If you are interested in volunteering to make this Thanksgiving a day to remember, please contact Linda, Community Relations Coordinator, at 715-491-0905 for more details.



Linda can also help you get connected with other Mission volunteer opportunities during the holiday season and throughout the year.



For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

— Jeremiah 29:11, ESV

## Guided by God ... to Hope Gospel Mission

For Penny, the worst part of being homeless wasn't having nowhere to go. It wasn't looking for a safe place to park and catch a few hours' sleep in the backseat. It wasn't even remembering all the abuse she had suffered: the broken bones, the burned apartment. It was not being invited to her grandson's first birthday party. "That broke my heart," she says simply.

During 25 years of marriage, raising six children, Penny had never envisioned such a bleak future. But after her divorce, she fell apart: drifting from one bad relationship to another, drinking heavily, even selling drugs to ward off the homelessness that eventually claimed the last of her dignity. "I felt so empty and alone," she says of those days.

Penny had no clear direction, but she made her way north to Eau Claire, where she heard about Hope Gospel Mission. Even here, surrounded by love and encouragement, she didn't believe her life could change. Then Penny was diagnosed with cancer.

Although she felt that God had given up on her, Penny says, "I prayed and I prayed, and one of the resident assistants at the house told me, 'Don't worry about what you have no control over. Put your worry in God's hands.' And I did. I believed her. It was like I was a different person." After a hysterectomy, Penny was free of cancer — no evidence in her lymph nodes. "There's no way to explain it except God was there, holding my hand."

Today, Penny looks forward to celebrating many birthdays with her grandchildren. "I have a great relationship with my kids. They tell me they're proud of me. I haven't been this happy in a really long time. I'm in a good place. I've overcome cancer and my addictions. I'm almost six months sober. I'm very thankful. I pray to God every night and ask Him to hold my hand."

Penny knows God was holding her hand all along, and that He guided her toward Hope Gospel Mission. "I didn't know where I was going or why, but He had His hand in it. It was my time to heal."

Many gifts are given throughout the year in honor of or in memory of loved ones. You can see a list of these special gift recognitions by viewing the online newsletter at [HopeGospelMission.org](http://HopeGospelMission.org)

Thanksgiving 2022

**HOPE**  
GOSPEL MISSION  
*Lives Rescued. Rebuilt. Renewed.*

# the hope

*Thankful for You!*

PO Box 1127, Eau Claire, WI 54702 | 715-552-5566 | [HopeGospelMission.org](http://HopeGospelMission.org)

Inside: Peter's Story • Thanksgiving is Coming! • Penny's Story





**Sandi Polzin**  
Executive Director

## Thankful to be Together

Dear Friend,

When God said in Genesis 2:18 that it's not good for man to be alone, He meant more than marriage. He meant relationships: family, friends, church, neighborhoods, all the social ties that bind us together.

That's especially true during the holiday season, which is just around the corner.

Most of our residents have broken their social ties, intentionally or not. Many never had strong relationships to begin with. For them, Thanksgiving would be just another day ... unless they spend it at Hope Gospel Mission.

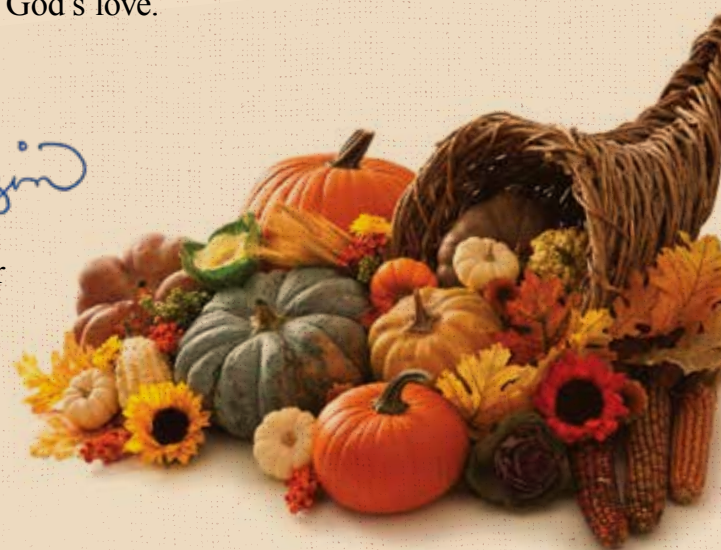
Here, after a delicious, filling meal, those who are hurting, homeless or alone can take the first steps out of isolation. In our program, they will learn to repair, build and maintain positive, healthy relationships. In time, with God's blessing, they will realize the joy of living with — and for — others, making meaningful contributions to our community. They will have the confidence and support they need to lead productive, satisfying lives again.

That is truly something to be thankful for!

And we are thankful for you. You are a valued member of our family this Thanksgiving and always. If you have the time, please stop by and wish our residents well. Give them encouragement and show them they are not alone, that we are bound together by God's love.

Sincerely,

Sandi Polzin  
Executive Director



**Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!**

— Psalm 133:1, ESV

**A special THANK YOU to Andersen Corporate Foundation Eau Claire Community Foundation Nordson Foundation Wells Fargo Xcel Energy Foundation for your generosity!**  
*You are changing lives of people in desperate need.*



Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

— Hebrews 11:1, ESV

## You Helped Peter Break the Bonds of Depression

**P**eter came to Eau Claire looking for a fresh start. After years battling a major depressive disorder, he wanted to “knock down and rebuild everything.” He thought he had all the building blocks in place: extended family nearby for support, a temporary job at UPS and certification as a CNA.

Peter's plan worked for a few months. He made it through the holidays but hit the wall in January 2020 when his depression returned. “I was stuck in a black apathy,” he says. “I stopped working. I stayed in my room for 18 months.”

When family called, Peter told them he was okay, that he was still working. But his money was running out, his rented room was “an absolute disaster” and there seemed no way out of his depression. Peter hit rock bottom the day his uncle came over and saw him living in squalor, overweight, on the verge of homelessness.

Peter's family contacted Hope Gospel Mission in June 2021. After 18 months alone in his room, being among other people was a big adjustment. “I'd gotten used to being isolated and this was overwhelming. I struggled, but I was excited to see what this place could do for me.”

Peter says Hope Gospel Mission instilled integrity and self-discipline into his life. However, the biggest benefit came when he allowed Jesus Christ into his heart. One day, he suffered an intense anxiety attack. “That was the first time I intentionally prayed to God,” he remembers. “I shut my eyes and said, ‘God, I need you.’ In two seconds, all the physical manifestations of that anxiety attack — the heart throbbing, the dizziness — were gone.”

Knowing he is loved by God has affirmed Peter's self-worth and helped him trust others. His relationship with his mother, once strained, is strong and deep. And he has lost 40 lbs!

Peter plans to stay in our Discipleship Transitions Program to ensure his stability and success. He loves his job as a driver for Fed Ex and hopes to enter a vet tech training program and launch a new career.

“Seeing God work in my life as a non-believer has been life changing,” Peter says. “It's the root of any growth I've had. I'm very grateful, every single day since I came to Christ. I'm only in that spot because of what the Holy Spirit did through so many people who work at and support Hope Gospel Mission.”

## Everyone Heals on Their Own Time.

**E**veryone who comes to Hope Gospel Mission has a different story. Some need a night or two of safe shelter, others need a month or more. Everyone walks their own path and heals on their own time.

Short Stay residents were previously limited to 30 days. Many needed more time to build their finances, procure safe housing and stable employment and create a workable budget. Now, each person is counseled to find the time that is specifically needed for them.

This new approach is so productive that we are expanding the short stay living space at the Hope Renewal Center for Men! It will increase the capacity for men from 12 to 24 and provide a larger living room, bathroom, and laundry area. The current beds will also be replaced with a new state-of-the-art modular bedding system to provide a more restful and dignified sleeping arrangement, as well as easy and safe top bunk access with stairs and railings.

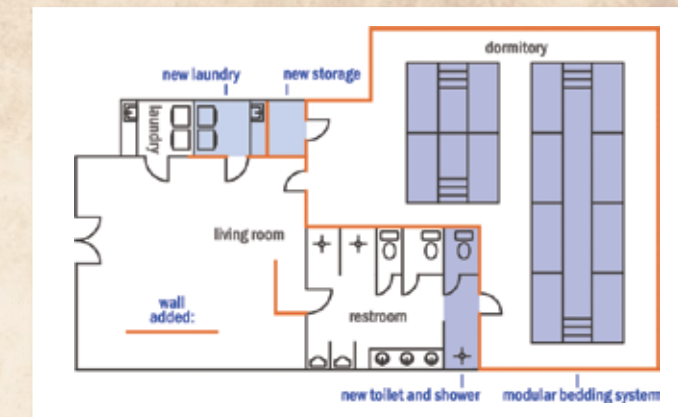
With your continued generosity we will have the short stay expansion completed before winter to serve and care for more men.

Your care for your community is seen and appreciated. Here are a couple of thank-you notes from residents to pass on to you.

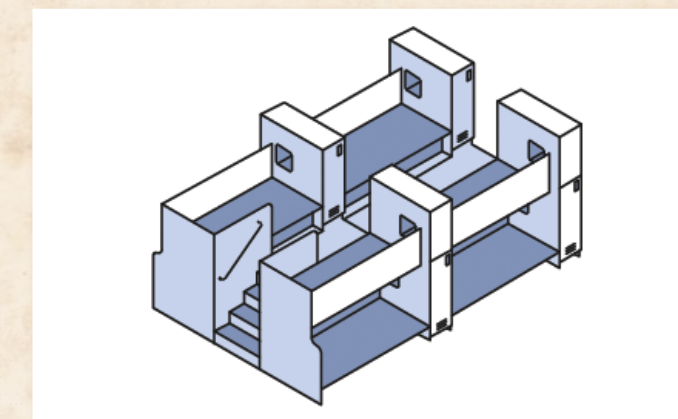
**“I now know that God cares for me and knows my needs. Thank you for making this possible!”**

**“Thank you for all of your kindness and the respect that is given to us.”**

May God bless you this season as you have continued to bless the Mission.



▲ Expansion will increase the capacity for men from 12 to 24 and provide a larger living room, bathroom, and laundry area.



▲ New state-of-the-art modular bedding system will provide a more restful and dignified sleeping arrangement, as well as easy and safe top bunk access with stairs and railings.

