

CATERPILLARS TO BUTTERFLIES!

Have you ever been privy to watching the amazing process of a butterfly emerging from its cocoon? It is shocking to see that what appears bears almost no resemblance to what first entered!

Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection are often compared to a caterpillar's metamorphosis from cocoon to butterfly. The caterpillar vanishes into a cocoon, seemingly dead, just as the Lord's lifeless body was placed in the tomb. Just as a stunning butterfly comes forth from a lifeless cocoon, Christ arose after three days with a new, glorified body that was barely physically recognizable.

The caterpillar's metamorphosis provides a wonderful illustration of spiritual transformation as well. If we were to examine the DNA of a caterpillar and that of a butterfly, we would find that they are exactly the same. The caterpillar looks and acts nothing like the butterfly, but it does in fact have the identity of a butterfly and will one day display all of its behaviors and characteristics. The caterpillar eventually transforms into its true identity!

The same is true of our DNA in Christ. We, as believers, are seen as holy, righteous, saints from the very moment we first surrendered our lives to Christ and accepted Him as our Savior. We become Christ in us! This is how God sees us and identifies us. He sees us as the amazing butterflies that we truly are. We spend much of our Christian walk trying to see ourselves in the same way God sees us instead of seeing ourselves as the caterpillars we once were.

The transformation that has taken place in each of us when we received the identity of Christ is nothing short of miraculous! This hope of transformation in the lives of those trapped in the pain and brokenness of addiction, and poverty, is at the core of Hope United's ministry. We praise God for amazing spiritual transformations like Jess's that you can read about in this newsletter. Each of you that gives of your time, talents, and resources to support Hope United, makes these changed lives possible. **Caterpillars to butterflies!**

This Easter season, as we reflect on the DNA of Christ that exists in each of us because of Jesus' sacrifice, may we have eyes to see ourselves and others as the beautiful butterflies that God has created us to be. May we walk in the freedom that is ours because of Christ's DNA in us and help others to do the same!

Please help Hope United continue to spread the life-changing message of hope to all those we serve through our ministries by giving generously to our cause. The needs are so great, and we can't do this work without you. Pray about how you can be involved in this powerful work.

Have a wonderful time celebrating and giving thanks this Easter Season for the gift of life that is ours through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection.



Spring 2022 • Newsletter

"WHATEVER YOU RUN AWAY FROM RUNS YOU."

-H.NORMAN WRIGHT

When Jess was five years old, she lost her mother to an accident and her father was sent to jail. Although she and her sisters were raised by her aunt, she found herself going from one bad relationship to another. Jess experienced significant abuse in these relationships and used drugs and alcohol to help her deal with the physical and emotional pain she was experiencing. At rock bottom Jess reached out to her aunt who raised her and asked for help. After completing a rehab program, Jess was able to move into Amanda's House, "I'm exactly where God wants me to be now!"

Although Jess has thrived at Amanda's House, she also acknowledges that it's been a transition. "I have had to learn how to be vulnerable, not be such a tough cookie. I don't have to be like that anymore." She also had to get used to the fact that people at Amanda's House really do care and want to help. "When you go from feeling so unlovable to being loved and cared for, sometimes it's hard to even believe it." Now she gets excited whenever she discovers that there are people who want to come alongside and help her and others. This help is already being put towards a bright



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future. Jess would like to become a recovery coach "I want to help other people with stories like mine and help them in their recovery" Jess will soon begin training to become a certified recovery coach. Supporters of Amanda's House have made this possible for her through their donations.

Jess now regularly attends Restoration Church and has even had the opportunity to bring her kids, 11-year-old Miley and 10-year-old Jaelon, with her. "They think it's really cool!" Jess admits that for a part of her life she was really mad at God but now "he's such a huge part of everything I do."

When asked what she would like to share with the supporters of Hope United and Amanda's House, Jess gets emotional. Similarly, to how she feels about asking for help from those at Amanda's House, she still has trouble believing that there are people who want to help her. "There aren't enough words. And there aren't enough thank yous."

To learn about how you can assist women like Jess through the Amanda's House Ministry please visit hopeunitedsjc.com



Interested in volunteer opportunities at Hope United?

We have many neighbors all around us that are desperate for hope and healing for their lives. You can be a part of helping to meet the spiritual, mental, and physical needs of those crying out for help. Won't you consider joining our efforts to love our neighbors in St. Joseph County well by getting involved today? Contact us at Hope United to learn more.

www.hopeunitedsjc.com or **269-858-5583**.



HOPE UNITED 5K/1 MILE SUPERHERO FUN RUN
JUNE 17TH, 2023

Hope United would like to invite you to join us in bringing our community together by supporting our annual Hope United 5K/ 1 Mile Superhero Fun Run! The proceeds from this event will benefit the many ministries of Hope United that bring hope and healing to those hurting in St. Joseph County. The race takes place during the Three Rivers Water Festival.

Come on out to get some exercise, bring your family or your group from work, school, or church and join the fun for a really great cause. Be sure to dress up like the superheroes you are! There will be raffle prizes and snacks available and also a photo booth!

Race begins at 9:00 am

Event Location:
333 W Michigan Ave, Three Rivers, MI 49093 - behind the fire station

**Early signup discounts and family rates are available*

For signup, information go to Hope United 5k (runsignup.com) or www.hopeunitedsjc.com



Sponsorship Opportunities are Available

Contact Jill Gunn for more information: **269-858-5583**
Or go to our website at www.hopeunitedsjc.com for more sponsorship information

