

MISSION GATE UPDATE

Turning Lives From Crime to Christ Since 1985

NOVEMBER 2024



Rick and Trish Mathes, Founders – The Cross Still Stands



The Cross is a sign of what we still must hold onto. Our residents lost their cabins, but they didn't lose their Lord. They are pressing on one day at a time for his glory and honor. They lost everything but gained knowing Christ in a deeper way. He truly does love them and will provide for them and for Mission Gate. It's not "the what," it is the "Who." Mission Gate is resolved to step out to even a greater reliance on Him in faith.



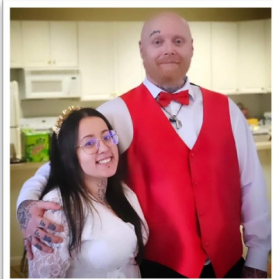
"What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ. " Philipians 3:8

Trish Mathes - Yes there is room for you!

Last night a mom and her son, Alex, knocked on the main lodge door at Fort Good Shepherd Ranch. The mother, Chrissy, asked, "Is this Fort Good Shepherd?" I told her, "Yes, but we just had a flood, and all our residents are bunched together in bunkhouses until we rebuild." All Alex wanted was a new start in life. The Idlewild supervisor, Eric, came over right away and also welcomed them. Alex told us how he was in 24-hour lockdown seven months ago and read his Bible. He said he didn't know what his cellmate thought when he knelt and broke down crying to the Lord, "Please help me!" There had been drugs all around him during his incarceration but since that day he never touched another drug. The mom had tears as Eric and I both hugged her and her son. She knew her kid was going to be all right.



Irish and Phil – Who would have ever thought?



Irish and Diana

You may remember Randall (Irish) Springli and Phil Pearl from Septemberfest 2022. We wanted to update everyone on what is happening now in their lives as they continue to walk with our Lord. Irish and Phil both have maintained employment with the same factories they got hired on at when they first arrived at Mission Gate 4 years ago. While in the program Irish was picked up on Federal charges from his past and he went to Federal holding for a little while, he stayed in touch with staff, his employer and continued seeking our Lord. The courts were impressed at the steps he was taking and allowed him to come back to Mission Gate. After graduating he continued to stay at Fort Good Shepherd saving until he was able to buy his first

home. He learned the importance of marriage in the site of our Lord and has recently got married to a wonderful Christian lady, Diana and gained a beautiful stepdaughter, Victoria. Phil, his best man, was right by his side. Phil continues to reside with us attending chapel, class, counseling, saving money and has not missed one day of work.

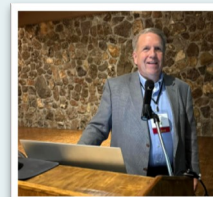


Phil Pearl



DOC Conference

Leaders from across the state of Missouri including, us at Mission Gate, joined together for the Department of Corrections Re-entry Conference put on by Archs. Greg Smith hosted a session about the importance of housing for those re-entering into society. We are blessed to have already been invited to come back next year.



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November 2024

As you may know, some of the cabins at Fort Good Shepherd Ranch of Mission Gate sit on the banks of the Meramec River. Fort Good Shepherd is a 54-bed facility for men re-entering society from prison. It occupies 130 acres, with five large homes and individual cabins. On Sunday, November 3rd, the area around Cuba and Steelville, MO was flooded with more than 10 inches of rain over three days. On Tuesday, November 5th, the river overflowed the banks, flooding 14 cabins and forcing 14 men out of their homes and into common living areas or other housing on campus. To show you the force of the water we had a 500 gallon propane tank, a picnic table and railroad ties all floating down the river. Our activity center and tool shed were also flooded. Praise God, all our residents and animals were safe! However, we are concerned that what was once a very rare occurrence is happening now more frequently. This is the second largest flood in the history of this part of the river cresting at more than 28 feet above the normal water level.



Unfortunately, our insurance does not cover the damages to these smaller cabins. Therefore, we need you help; 10 out of the 14 cabins were affected by this natural disaster. Resulting in an estimated cost of \$40,000 for renovations and remodeling. This will help get 10 men back in their homes. The morale of our men is currently high, but it will soon become a strain on everyone. Our displaced residents are doubling up and sleeping on sofas. The other four cabins received significant damage where they were shifted off their foundations. We have decided to demolish them since they are so close to the river's edge. By the time you receive this newsletter, we will have already had three workdays and countless hours of work from our staff, residents, and the community with more workdays to come.

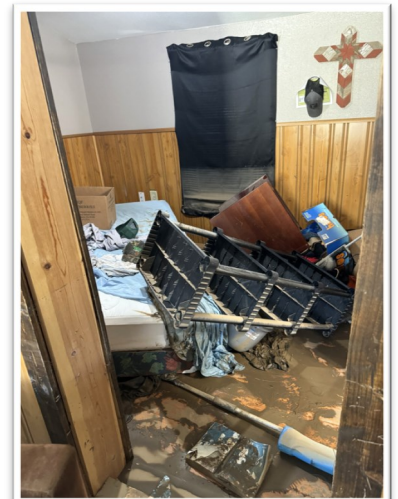
What does this mean for our future? We are praying about constructing a new bunkhouse on higher ground which would take 9 to 12 months to complete. It would be located next to the Wilderness Lodge where nine other men currently reside. Kevin O'Brien, one of our board members who owns Agape Construction, is planning to donate architectural design services as well as carpentry labor to help frame the new building. Mission Gate will be responsible for all building materials, appliances, electrical, plumbing, etc. Please pray if there is any way you can help with this project as we continue to change lives from crime to Christ!

All of this was unexpected and of course unbudgeted, and as we said, insurance does not cover any of the cost. As of now, we know we need \$40,000 to remodel the 10 cabins, which by the grace of God is much less than it could have been.

We are asking you to:

- Please pray and ask the Lord if He is leading you to help financially with the cost of our initial remodeling of the 10 cabins;
- Please pray for the dozen men who will still be displaced after we complete the first project, and for our new Christian men who have already been approved to come but have yet to be released from prison.
- Please pray for guidance for our Board as we decide what to do about a new bunkhouse, and consider whether you can assist us in the future if the Lord leads us to move ahead with that project;

Needless to say, this is a difficult time for us, but the Lord is already bringing good out of it. Our community is pulling together, and the faith of our staff and residents is rising to the surface. He is a good God who always keeps His promises, and we know that He will lead us through this test and support us as we serve Him!



"God is a refuge and strength that is always ready to help in times of trouble." - Psalm 46:1