

MISSION GATE UPDATE

Turning Lives From Crime to Christ Since 1985

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2026



Rick Mathes, Founder, Prison Minister



At last, there is a Shepherd's Inn where the Lord is welcome and all those who are turning their lives from crime to Christ will have a new building addition at Fort Good Shepherd Ranch. Shepherd's Inn is for those who follow Him and are most welcome. This building will expand our ministry at the Fort by 35%. We thank Agape Construction for donating the labor costs of architectural drawings, framing and construction in addition to the \$500,000 so many of you have

and continue to donate, allowing this to be a debt-free endeavor.

What a joy it is to swing the gate even wider and more successfully to assist the Department of Corrections in reducing recidivism even more. Thank you for your prayers, financial support and encouragement as we press on into our second 40 years debt free.

"I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture."
John 10:9

Maria Valenzuela – Transform my heart Lord, as only you can



Before

In prison for the fifth time, I knew I needed to find a safe place to rebuild my faith and get away from all the madness I had surrounded myself with so many times before, so I put my application in to go to Hannah's Ranch. I came here with hurt, hate, and bitterness in my heart from past pains. I made the decision to surrender everything to God and started seeking a relationship with Him. I can laugh and feel the joy. I wake up everyday with a purpose and thanking God for His unconditional love. The blessings are nice but the transformation in my life through Him, healing my heart, is something I will forever praise Him for. Help me Lord to honor you.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13



I love my new life!

Trish Mathes, Executive Director – A sweet arrival at Promises of Hope

The twins and their mother have arrived at Promises of Hope Ranch, presenting a heartwarming opportunity for the mom to bond further after spending the first eight months of the babies' lives together at Vandalia. We ask for prayer for the incarcerated families, the staff, and for smooth transitions. We know the challenges that come with such emotional goodbyes from the DOC staff in the nursery wing at Women's Eastern Reception and Diagnostic Center. This marks the fifth instance of Mission Gate taking babies and their moms from this facility since their opening this past year. What a wonderful program at DOC and so glad we are here for the next phase of the babies' and moms' lives! They are precious. Please pray for beautiful lives for them.



Department of Corrections' officers saying their "Goodbyes" to Kathy and her baby girls, Melody and Lyric.

Join us for our annual Fort Good Shepherd/St. Louis luncheon from noon to 1:30p.m. at Lodge of Des Peres on April 17, 2026. No charge, but please make reservations and bring guests to this wonderful event where you will hear powerful testimonies!

MISSION GATE UPDATE

January/February 2026

Matthew May – My precious granddaughter, Genevieve

Words can't describe the gratitude I have for Mission Gate and the founders, Rick and Trish Mathes. I wouldn't be here, with my granddaughter today, without you showing me a new way to live. All praises go to God. I chose to submit after He humbled me, and my God showed grace. With that came an amazing relationship with my daughter and now my beautiful granddaughter, Genevieve. She is so perfect. Without God none of this would be possible. I implement everything I learned at Mission Gate each day and life keeps getting better. Without knowing God, I would have missed all of this.

"You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore." – Psalms 16:11



Matthew May and Genevieve

James Fields – A place for children to grow in the Lord with their father

When we look at the state that our world is in today, we might wonder how we can get things back on course. Rick Mathes once told me that the way to change the world is by godly men raising their children to be godly also. With the completion of Shepherd's Inn right around the corner, Fort Good Shepherd has been blessed to turn a two-room cabin into Daddy's Place. David McClellan states, "This is the first time in my life I feel like a real father." Pheonix was so excited about going to church with his dad, he went back to his mother's and asked if they could start going to church. Please pray for our extended families.



Stephen Neal takes his daughter, Taylor, to church Sunday mornings at Journey Tower Grove. Stephen is a house leader at Mission Gate's Guest Home on Osage Street in St. Louis. He has been there for two years and loves growing and serving God.



David McClellan and Pheonix

His daughter previously attended Children's Church, but told her dad, "I want to sit by you, Dad, and hear the worship service with you. I may have questions." Stephen told Trish that his daughter asks all kinds of questions. Taylor did not understand "God wants to use us". Her Dad said to be a light to the world and tell others about Jesus. "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6.

Stephen Neal and Taylor

After church, they go to the movies, bowling, walks, or anywhere they can spend quality time. They have gone to 6-Flags, a daddy/daughter dance and a Christian concert by Forrest Frank is in the plans. He remembers the days he could not see his daughter and truly cherishes every moment with her, every Sunday.

Daddy's Place will be a refuge for men in both our St. Louis Guest Homes and Fort Good Shepherd locations to have their children stay with them on the weekends and take them to church on Sunday.

Winter at Mission Gate



"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden." – Matthew 5:14