

GOD'S SHELTER OF LOVE

AUGUST 2016

SERVING DECATUR SINCE 1991

I've attended Churches of Christ and Independent Christian Churches my entire life, all 76 years of it. I was pleased that when I gave my offering at Antioch Christian Church, part of it went to support God's Shelter of Love, to help homeless people—people who were down on their luck, probably due to alcohol or drug abuse or mental illness. Never would I have dreamed that one day I, myself, would become one of those poor homeless people. But here's how it happened.

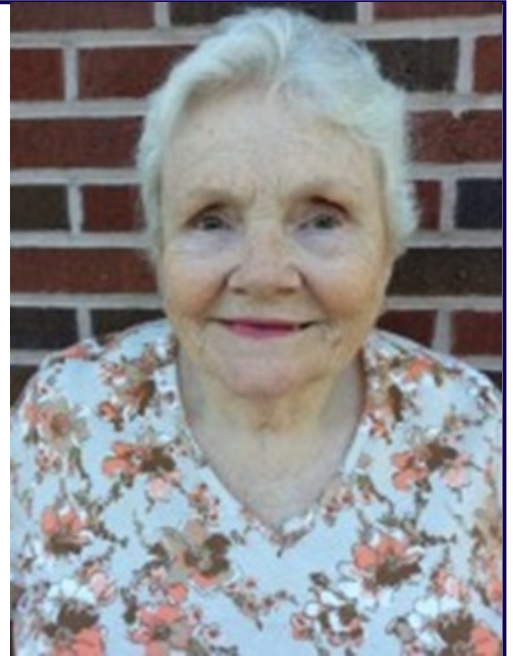
After 37 years of marriage, my husband Jerry died in 1998. We had had a great life together, including a wonderful daughter who gave us four wonderful grandchildren, many friends, and annual camping trips—even more often after Jerry retired from Staley's. He left me with a modest, but comfortable, mortgage-free home on Decatur's east side, plus savings of several thousand dollars. Our home contained many beautiful pieces of woodwork Jerry had made. I missed him immensely, but I was able to enjoy my life, often babysitting my seven great-grandchildren and continuing to take trips in our RV. My monthly Social Security check was enough to cover my frugal lifestyle.

One day, I received a phone call announcing some exciting news—I had won a prize of \$2 million! All I had to do to claim my money was send \$200 to Jamaica. Of course I did whatever the prize-granting people asked of me. While waiting to receive this amazing gift, I made careful plans of what I would do with it. I would give a tithe to my church, give portions to my daughter and grandchildren, and buy my dream house. It would have four bedrooms, so that my great-grandchildren could come and stay overnight often. It would have a spacious sewing room to accommodate my three sewing machines and all of my patterns and paraphernalia. (Not to brag, but I am a pretty good seamstress; I even made my daughter's wedding dress.)

The prize was delayed and delayed. But the people who had promised it to me were kind and supportive and, in fact, became very good friends of mine. They called often and often needed more money from me for one reason or another. I was happy to comply for quite a while, eventually giving them all of my savings. When it was time to pay my property taxes, for several years I just didn't have the money. But I didn't worry because I knew the \$2 million was coming to me soon.

Well, as you have probably guessed, that prize money was never coming to me. And because of my trusting nature, I lost every material thing of value to me. My home was sold for back taxes and my belongings were cast into huge dumpsters—including a unique end table Jerry had designed just for me, many of his intricately-carved wood animals, my sewing machines, my photos—everything. I arrived at God's Shelter with little more than the clothes on my back.

I am now experiencing first-hand the loving, home-like environment provided free of any charge to people who really need the help. Because I live rent-free, I have been able to use my Social Security money to get some long-overdue health needs taken care of, including cataract surgery and dental work. I have a twin bed, a small dresser, and half a closet to call my own for as long as I need to be here. While most residents are required to seek paying employment, at my age I am allowed to volunteer my services at Blessingdales, where I measure and cut cloth and have prepped several donated sewing machines for resale. **I'm so grateful that God's people continue to support God's Shelter of Love. Thank you all!**



You are likely reading this article while I am riding my bicycle across Iowa with my 16 year old son, Jackson. We are riding in the RAGBRAI—the Register’s Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa, July 24th-30th. We are hoping to raise \$5000 for the shelter. Above all, please pray for our safety and for stamina needed to complete this 420 mile ride. The forecast is looking hot!

I hope you will plan to attend our Fall banquet, Saturday, September 10th at 6 p.m. at the Grand Palace, Heartland Community Church in Decatur. We like to hold the banquet annually to thank you for your support of our mission and to provide you with news and updates on our ministry to the homeless. BJ Leonard from First Christian Church in Decatur will speak about his inner-city ministry in the GM Square neighborhood, just north of our shelter. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. with a silent auction. Our dinner and short program will begin at 6 p.m. Please call our office and reserve your seats.

We are truly grateful to you for standing alongside us as we bring Christ’s message of light and hope into the lives of so many who live in darkness. You provide nourishing food and warm beds to families in crisis, but more than that, your ongoing compassion and caring provide a disciplined, loving, Christian environment where people can say yes to Jesus, who wants to make them whole.

God bless you for caring,

Ed Bacon, Director

**These are pictures of just a few of the cards made by Miss Reel's & Mrs. Ventress' third grade students at William Harris elementary school. These cards really touched the hearts of our residents! What a blessing they are! So kind and compassionate! Thank you, students!**





## A Thread from the Thrift Shop



Blessingdales has “Back to School” merchandise in stock. We have a limited supply of school uniforms and backpacks.

You will need to hurry in for Fall and Halloween merchandise. Our full stock can be found in our seasonal room, and it’s moving fast!

Volunteers are always needed! Even an hour a week can make a big difference!

Mercy Gardens aims to double produce production from last year. As of mid-July, 1945 lbs. of fresh produce has been harvested. What a wonderful thing! Hat's off to all the garden workers and the great kitchen staff at the Good Samaritan Inn for turning that wonderful food into creative, healthy lunches. Mercy Gardens continues to be a great blessing to God’s Shelter of Love and the rest of the community by providing produce and job-training opportunities. Keep up the great work!



### Needs List

**Shelter:** milk, meat, bus tokens, garbage bags (33 gallon), windex, toilet bowl cleaner, cooking oil, laundry detergent, dryer sheets, bleach.

**Blessingdales:** volunteers, manila folders, packing tape.

**Blessingdales shopping and donation drop-off hours: Monday - Saturday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

### Bible Trivia “Funnies”

What insect went to Egypt on a donkey?

The Flea: The angel told Joseph to take Mary, the baby and flee into Egypt.

What bird placed Jonah in the belly of the fish?

A swallow

Why did the unemployed man get excited while looking through his Bible?

He thought he saw a Job.

To what question could Eve never say yes?

When Adam asked if she had heard a joke from anyone else



**Ed Bacon, Executive Director**

**Harold Batthauer, Board President**

**Ty Batthauer, Decatur, IL**

**Larry Hughes, Warrensburg, IL**

**Michael Mallick, Lincoln, IL**

**Mike Reynolds, Decatur, IL**

**Greg Taylor, Clinton, IL**



God's Shelter of Love was the mission of the week at Little Galilee Christian Camp during the Junior Main Camp, June 5-10 (pictured on the left) and the Jr. High Main Camp and Jr. High Fishing Camp, July 17-22. These young campers were very generous in their support. Thank you, campers, for your kindness and compassion toward those who are less fortunate! You have made a great difference!

GOD'S SHELTER OF LOVE  
929 NORTH UNION STREET  
DECATUR, ILLINOIS 62522  
(217) 422-2790/2791

NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
US POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT #252  
DECATUR, ILLINOIS

\*RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



God's Shelter of Love Banquet  
Saturday, September 10th, 6 p.m.  
The Grand Palace  
3253 N Brush College Rd, Decatur, IL  
RSVP by calling our office  
(217) 422-2790.

Visit us online @ [Godsshelteroflove.org](http://Godsshelteroflove.org) & [Blessingdalesthiftshop.com](http://Blessingdalesthiftshop.com)

