




Set free from alcohol, Mark's spirit was restored and renewed at PGM.

“WITH YOUR HELP, WE PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.”

You will read Mark Wilson's story in this month's issue. Here to renew his relationship with God and break the stronghold of alcohol, he shares his testimony and how Pacific Garden Mission is helping him. As we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ this month, remember that with your help, stories like Mark's are possible, and the life-changing Gospel is being proclaimed. Mark shares that some come here just to escape the cold, while others come to grow closer to God, but everyone at the Mission will hear the Gospel proclaimed. Thank you for being a part of our ministry. We couldn't do it without you.

MARK WILSON

“Hello, my name is Mark. I am 60 years old and come from California. I came to Chicago to Pacific Garden Mission to reconnect with my Lord Jesus. When I was just a young man, we traveled a lot. We went through 49 states before I was 13. We had an interesting life, but I wasn't saved and didn't know Jesus until my early teens. I was baptized in a small Baptist church when I was around 14 and did well. I connected with my church until my later teens when I started getting drawn away from the Lord. As time passed, I grew farther from God and stopped reading my Bible and



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attending church. The devil took that and ran with it.”

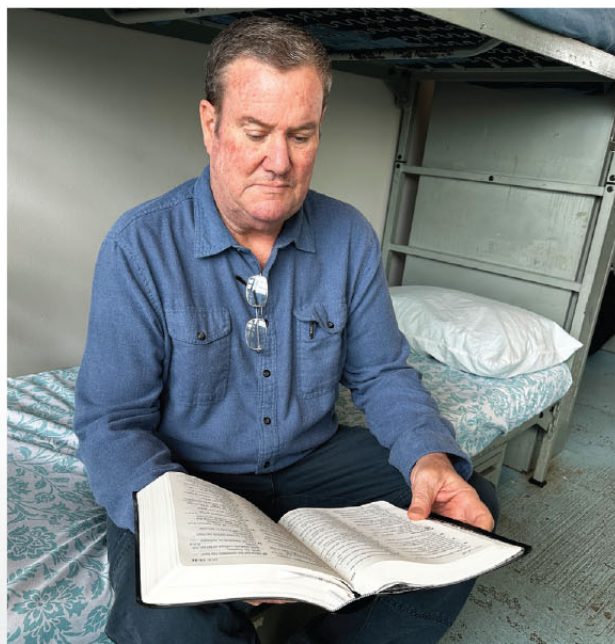
“I began by drinking beer with my friends, but as time passed, I started drinking heavier. Because the beer wasn’t strong enough, I started drinking vodka, a fifth a day, for over twenty years. I was putting alcohol before God, and it was an idol. God kept me safe from a lot of bad stuff, so I felt like I had an angel on my shoulder.

“God brought me to Pacific Garden Mission to renew and restore my spirit. Some people come here just to get out of the cold. I came here to restore my fellowship with God, and that is what is happening now. I can feel it, and it’s a wonderful feeling. I graduated from the 90-day substance abuse program. It was helpful and informational about addictions as far as physical and psychological, while also mixing in Biblical studies.

“The New Life Bible program, which I went into next,

allowed me to get much deeper into the Word, and helped arm me for the battle when I go back out into the world. I want to ensure I am solid and firm in the Lord. In the phase of the program I am in now, we are learning heavily about discipleship and sharing the Gospel with others.

“This place has the best teachers, counselors, and pastors. The love here is tremendous. I feel like I am at home.



Mark reads his Bible on the New Life dorm during some downtime.

The friendship, the support, and the love of PGM; they care about me and about everybody here. It doesn't matter how downtrodden you are.

"I now serve in ministry services as an office assistant, helping the other program men with their needs. I have been in the New Life program for eight months now. I attend a small Baptist church every Sunday and have formed good relationships there. I am learning how to be of service to others now. To be mindful of other's needs.

"I need to get my own heart right. I am not getting any younger and know it's time to change. Even though I was saved, I was weak in my foundation. I needed to stay in the Word and stay connected with my church.

"Christmastime here can be lonely because you are not with your family, but here you are with another family. We celebrate Christmas and the birth of Jesus with a special meal and service along with a whole new family who are learning about Jesus, or already know Jesus and are getting help for their problems. If I could choose any

place to be during Christmas, other than with my family, it would be here at PGM."

Mark has been at PGM for about 11 months and will graduate from the Bible program in another eight months. During this extended time of learning, structure, and discipleship, he is gaining the spiritual tools he needs to succeed when he leaves. He has formed new friendships and mentors, which can be vital to his success. This Christmas, we are thankful to have a Christ-centered refuge for the lost and weary, and we are grateful for your continued support of our sanctuary. It is a light for those who are struggling, and people from across the nation come to grow closer to God here. *Thank you.*



Mark shares warm fellowship with another New Life student on the third floor common area.

**"But seek ye first the kingdom of God,
and his righteousness; and all these
things shall be added unto you."
— Matthew 6:33 KJV**

Christmas: A home away from home

As Mark said in his testimony, celebrating Christmas in a rescue mission is not easy. We know the holidays can be difficult for our residents in an unfamiliar environment. This is why we do everything we can to make their experience during this season as welcoming and pleasant as possible. We have a Christmas meal, a special Christmas service, and a gift store giveaway for the children, moms, and program students. While it may not be ideal to celebrate the holidays at PGM, we can rest assured they will experience the love of Christ, warm fellowship, and a safe, wholesome environment. *Thank you for helping us make this time of year as lovely as possible for all who call PGM home.*



GIVE NOW pgm.org/donate

Visit our website at pgm.org to learn more about PGM's multiple ministries to the needy.



A Word from Philip Kwiatkowski
President, Pacific Garden Mission

THEIR CHRISTMAS HOME

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” —Luke 2:10-11 KJV

For many residents here at PGM, Christmas is an emotional season. Faced with the present reality of spending Christmas at a shelter surrounded by strangers, and haunted by memories of Christmas past. I recently asked our women residents to share memories of Christmas past, and here is a sampling.

“My best memory of Christmas is when I helped my mom decorate the tree.”

“In 2018, seeing my kids opening their gifts with big smiles on their faces.”

“All my family together putting up the tree and decorations, my grandmother baking her cakes and pies.”

“My mother was a single mom with five small children. We lived in a one-room basement apartment with a limited income, and she bought us all coloring books and crayons.”

For many, their memories are of family and celebration, no different than anyone else. At PGM, we understand the emotional state of many of our residents and try to make it as homelike as possible. We decorate the mission, have Gospel-centered services, give the gifts that have been donated to our children, and seeing the looks on their faces is priceless. To top it off is the extravagant homestyle Christmas meal so many look forward to. Although being in a shelter is not ideal, we want to make it as memorable as possible for those who reside here. Let's remember those living here this Christmas.

I just want to say Merry Christmas and thank you for your love and support.

THE IMPACT WE MAKE TOGETHER

Pacific Garden Mission's budget is completely donor-funded. We receive no government funding. We are eternally grateful for the individuals, businesses, churches, and foundations that make it possible for PGM to serve thousands of homeless men, women, and children each year. When you support us financially, you're not only giving *to* the Mission, but *through* the Mission to people who need your help the most. In October your support made a true difference:

On average, **535** homeless people received aid and Gospel services each day

About **28,223** plates of food were served
21,300 items of clothing were distributed

3,147 media outlets around the world broadcasted *Unshackled!*

34 men and women were enrolled in Bible study programs and provided room and board

6 mothers with their children who were sheltered at PGM

65 people professed faith in Christ and became new believers at PGM

With your encouragement and support, we minister hope to the homeless, addicted, and brokenhearted.

GODLY STEWARDSHIP

Impacting Others for the Good

Osman Webb,
Vice-President of Administration
and Finance

**“And whosoever shall give to drink
unto one of these little ones a cup of
cold water . . .” —Matthew 10:42 KJV**

One of the things I greatly appreciate about the Bible is its enduring message of hope! This Advent season, we commemorate the greatest event in all human history, the incarnation. When the eternal Son of God entered space and time as a genuine human being, without diminishing His divinity, He brought the Good News of hope—the gift of salvation. During His earthly ministry, Jesus transformed many lives by His message, power, and demonstrative acts of extraordinary compassion. On account of His great love, Jesus readily identified with the afflictions and forlornness of broken humanity (Isaiah 53:4; Matthew 25:31-45; Hebrews 4:15). Our Lord was deeply moved by the suffering of others, and His miracles were a testament to not only the wrongness of our brokenness but were also a display of God the Father’s intent to one day

permanently reverse such conditions with the ushering in of the eternal state (Revelation 21:1-5).

Jesus truly gave people hope, and even now—seated at God the Father’s right hand, Jesus is still very much in the business of transforming lives and giving people hope.

At Pacific Garden Mission, we sincerely want individuals to have hope, which is why we are so committed to proclaiming the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ to all those who enter our doors. In addition to sharing the Gospel, many of our staff and volunteers endeavor to demonstrate the love of Christ to each man, woman, and child they encounter. I want to stress that your generous and intentional giving makes it possible to provide our residents with quality clothes, delicious and nutritious meals, and other needed services that bring comfort and dignity in a less-than-ideal setting.

Thank you so much for your interest, contribution, and partnership with this ministry at Pacific Garden Mission. May God bless you and those you hold dear this Christmas season and well into the new year.

***Warmly and Appreciatively,
Yours in Christ Jesus.***

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