



*Established in 1867 – Celebrating Our 156<sup>th</sup> Christmas!!!*

### **Dear Friends and Partners with Olive Branch Mission:**

Christmastime at The Mission is quite amazing. We realize that may sound absurd but it is absolutely true. It's like any other family coming together for the wondrous day. Christmas preparations begin immediately following Thanksgiving. The self-appointed beautification team, which consists of staff members, volunteers and residents, begin meticulously decorating The Mission.

The "Men of the House" happily retrieve totes and boxes from the storage room bursting with trees, garland, lights and ornaments. They unload trucks filled with hams, roasts, can goods, vegetables and various delectables used to prepare the week long Christmas dinners. They take pride in getting the building in tip top shape.

The "Ladies of the House" are elated to assist when the cooks ask their opinion regarding a Christmas recipe or cooking techniques. They readily swap ideas and pitch in whenever given the opportunity. They are honored to know that their opinion matters and to be included in the festivity preparations.

Moms marvel at their unique room creations fashioned from the various Christmas ornaments and stockings provided by The Mission. It becomes a friendly competition to see whose decorations receive the most compliments. They appreciate the staff efforts in helping achieve the feeling of family and normalcy as much as possible during a most difficult time.

Children dart around dancing and playing while ringing off all the items on their Christmas lists. They take turns sneaking candy canes off the Christmas tree. The smiles that blanket their precious little faces does not reveal an ounce of worry or shame. They are simply children anxious for Christmas and all the joy it brings.

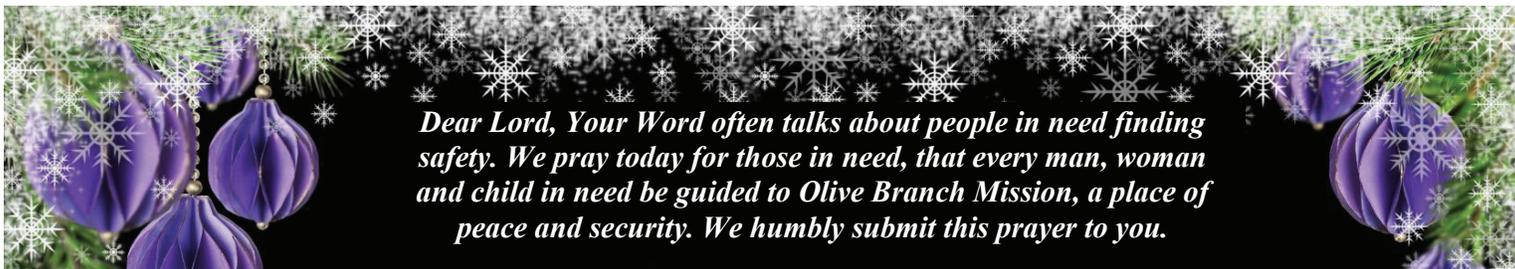
Christmas morning is loud and frenzied - filled with children's screams of delight and mom's smiles of gratitude. We witness adults weep when handed a Christmas gift bearing their name because they can't remember the last time someone thought enough of them to pick out and wrap a gift. The joy of Christmas and belonging affects everyone at The Mission, young and old.

The laughter resonating throughout the building despite the circumstances of each individual is evident that LOVE, JOY, HOPE and PEACE resides at this wonderful place called Olive Branch Mission!

We are so blessed that God has entrusted the lives of so many wonderful souls to our care. We are blessed to have you share in the making of a wonderful Christmas. We cannot thank you enough for caring.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!**





*Dear Lord, Your Word often talks about people in need finding safety. We pray today for those in need, that every man, woman and child in need be guided to Olive Branch Mission, a place of peace and security. We humbly submit this prayer to you.*

He slowly walked through the doors of The Mission carrying a suitcase in each hand and a bag over his shoulder, he hung his head in shame as he ushered his wife and two small sons inside. You could see the anguish blanketing his face as he surveyed his surroundings.

The boys began investigating the Christmas decorations and villages as the House Manager orientated mom and dad regarding room assignments, meals and any special needs related to the children. He watched as the boys talked to the Security Guard about their favorite games and toys. The bigger boy yelling, "He likes Ninja Turtles but Spiderman is better! But we both like Legos!" The Security Guard let out a hearty laugh. Dad apologized to the guard for his sons' intrusion. The guard stated, "No problem I have two boys of my own. And the Spiderman Ninja Turtle battle was a thing with them years ago. They're teenagers now. They grow up so fast." Dad gave a faint smile and nodded in agreement.

The House Manager interrupted to inform the mom and dad that meals had been reserved for them and they were welcome to go into the dining room to eat and feed the children dinnertime. Mom thanked the House Manager and immediately began to collect the boys. Dad quietly said, "I'll be ok. I just want to make sure my family eats. Can they please have my portion so that I know they've had enough?" The House Manager assured him there was more than enough for all of them as well as seconds. As they entered the dining room they see an older gentleman cleaning tables and sweeping. He looked up and exclaimed, "Merry Christmas!" The mom and boys laughed and exchanged pleasantries. Dad looked away and mumbled, "What's merry about spending Christmas at a homeless shelter?" Mom gave him an admonishing look as she continued to feed the boys. She pointed in the direction of the boys who were now counting the Christmas stockings hanging on the walls of the dining room and said, "We're fine. I have a really good feeling about this place." Dad whispered, "I'm sorry honey, I just can't believe I allowed this to happen. This isn't how the move back home was supposed to go. I thought we'd be ok staying with my cousin for a few weeks while I started the new job. I never imagined he was living like that. I couldn't allow him to put us in harm's way. I just need a couple weeks to get us back on track. I hate that my family is homeless... especially at Christmastime." Mom looked reassuringly into her husband's watery eyes...

Out of nowhere, the older man, chimed in, "Isn't that how the Christmas story begins, with a homeless family traveling? I don't recall ever knowing who owned that stable and why they let that family stay there but I do know it was a blessing when that family needed it the most. That stable provided everything they needed for the time they were there. Young man, know that God sees you and your beloved family. Think of this as your stable in Bethlehem. You are warm, fed, protected and most of all loved."

Dad looked at the older gentleman and said, "Thanks for your perspective. I guess I didn't think of it like that." I am grateful for this organization and its staff. How long have you worked here?" The old man gave a sly grin and said, "I don't work here, I'm just a weary traveler and humble recipient of the stable's provisions."

Please cut/tear off this section and mail with your tax-deductible contribution.

Help provide much needed supplies by purchasing from our Amazon Wish List



Please use this gift to help provide a wonderful Christmas (Meals & Shelter)

For each homeless man, woman and child at Olive Branch Mission. (DEC2023)



Please find enclosed my/our gift of:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$750 \$1000 \$1500 Other Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please charge to my:

VISA MASTERCARD DISCOVER AMEX

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Your gift is 100% tax-deductible. You will receive a receipt for your donation.

**OLIVE BRANCH MISSION PLEDGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY**

Olive Branch Mission is governed by an independent Board of Directors. Annually, we are audited by an independent certified public accountant. Our financial statement is a matter of public record. We are registered with the State of Illinois as a non-profit organization in good standing. We never have, nor will we ever exchange or sell donor addresses and/or information to anyone. Gifts will be applied to Mission needs and programs where the need is greatest.

Administrative Offices -6310 S. Claremont Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60636 Tel: 773.476.6200 www.obmission.org