

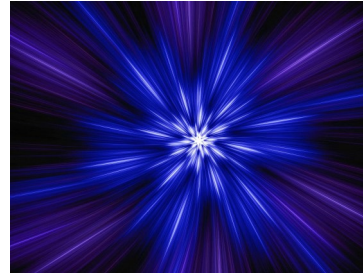
# MERCY MATTERS



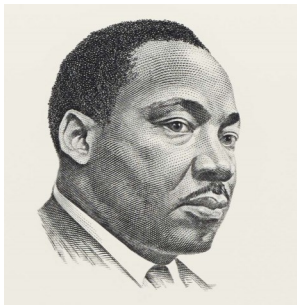
## We Draw Near the Light of God through Each Other

Dear Friends,

“Like the Magi, look to the heavens for hope,” Pope Francis told us on the Feast of the Epiphany. We must also be the star of Bethlehem for each other here on earth. He shared that we must shine bright by “drawing near to one another.” In doing so, we draw near to the light of God, who is love. This is the journey of life for us.

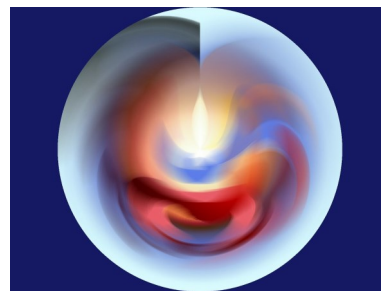


Here at MNM, like the Wise Ones, we are on a journey full of uncertainty, challenge and possibilities. We can grow weary during these times of turmoil and violence in our cities and in our world. Let us look to God and to one another as we follow the star of hope and light.

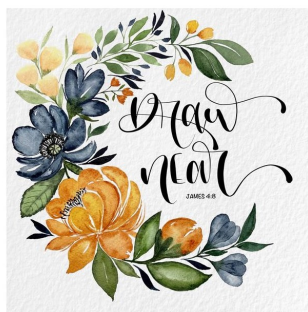


As we continue our travels into 2021, COVID-19, civil unrest, poverty, homelessness, and depression abound. At the same time, we hear about “Good Neighbors” and “Hometown Heroes” on the news every evening. Grade school children are finding ways to feed the hungry and both non-profits and local businesses are embracing new ways to share their light and love. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, who we remember and celebrate each January reminds us this way: “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that, Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

As the graduates of our training programs and home care aides share their stories, we know that we at Mercy Neighborhood Ministries are impacting not only our students and aides, but also those who are ill and those who are homebound. Epiphany also means that we see deeply into the meaning of something and we discover the light there.



A recent graduate of the Hospital Worker Readiness Program shared that she had been dealing with a certain darkness in her life. It felt overwhelming. She couldn't find a way out and there was no one who believed in her -including herself. Coming to MNM gave her confidence to “at least begin a class. Then I found that if I studied and connected with classmates and teachers, I could improve little by little.” Not only did Samika find light in others, she found light within herself.



Your generous ways of drawing near to our students, staff, elderly homebound, home care aides, and those who count on us for food and friendship manifest God's goodness. Your gifts of time and talent help to make the journey to health, wholeness and happiness much smoother for those who are otherwise alone and feeling stuck in patterns of hopelessness. You manifest hope. You are an Epiphany. Each of us draws near the light of God, who is love, through one another.

Blessings,

*S. Mary Stanton*

January, 2021

### Generosity Overflows at MNM

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the many individuals, businesses organizations and schools who shared their time, talent, and treasure with us over the past few months. You never cease to amaze us with your kindness and compassion when we least expect it. You are truly the Touch of Mercy!



### Holiday Gift Wrapping for Homebound Seniors



### Homemade gift bags for our Home Care clients



### Food pantry collection delivered by St. Xavier High School



# Changing Lives with the Touch of Mercy



## City of Cincinnati Giving Tree benefits MNM

Each holiday season Cincinnati's **First Lady, Dena Cranley**, selects a local nonprofit to be the beneficiary of the **City of Cincinnati's City Hall Giving Tree**. Imagine our excitement when Mrs. Cranley called in early December to let us know MNM had been chosen as this year's beneficiary! Even though the holiday season was going to look very different than past years,



Mrs. Cranley shared that it was more important than ever to uphold the annual tradition of the Giving Tree since so many of the most vulnerable in our community continued to be impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic. Just before the Christmas holiday, **Mayor Cranley** delivered a car full of donated items including blankets, bath towels, insulated lunch bags, personal care items, laundry detergent and more. In addition to soliciting items from the wish list, a **Go Fund Me campaign raised over \$1000** to support Mercy Neighborhood Ministries. Thank you, Mayor and Mrs. Cranley, and all the City of Cincinnati employees and residents that supported MNM through the Giving Tree. Your generosity and kindness were one of the highlights of our holiday season!

## MNM Partners to Provide CARES Act Assistance

In response to the economic crisis brought on by the COVID 19 pandemic, the **Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Stability (CARES) Act** provided much needed support to millions of people in our country. One of the most critical aspects of the legislation was funding for rental and utility assistance administered through state and local governments all across the country. In August, 2020, **MNM agreed to participate** in our community's well coordinated program for rental and utility relief led by **Community Action Agency (CAA)**. This program was in perfect alignment with our mission, and we knew many of MNM's own programs participants were in need of



such assistance as they faced layoffs and reductions in work hours. Over the past 4 months, **MNM has assisted over 120 individuals and their families with \$175,000 in rental and utility support**. Behind the scenes, MNM's amazing staff also connected individuals with other community resources including the **Greater Cincinnati Water Works Relief Program, CAA's Rapid Re-Employment Initiative**, and food pantries in their neighborhoods. Recently, one of our staff received an email from a CARES Act recipient expressing her deep gratitude for the wraparound support she received. **"I wanted to thank you once again for being AMAZING!!!! I never knew there were people out there like you. Beverly from CAA and Gary from Easter Seals**



**that MNM connected me with are helping me with employment resources so that I can get back to work. I'm overwhelmed with emotion at the kindness you all have displayed to me. 2020 was a nightmare. I finally feel like everything just might be ok after all. I will keep you updated. I'm very excited for what's to come and with hope and faith I think 2021 will be a whole lot better. Thank you again."** It's messages like this that

remind us that in the most of challenging of times, MNM and other human service agencies are a light for many in our community. We are grateful to be part of such and extraordinary effort to support our neighbors in need.

## MNM Food Pantry Volunteers Go Above and Beyond

Food insecurity has been an ongoing challenge for many of the clients in MNM's Senior and Supportive Services program since



the beginning of the pandemic. When we shifted our food pantry to primarily home bound deliveries due to the pandemic, MNM's faithful volunteers heeded the call for assistance. Since April, **15-20 volunteers load up their cars and deliver bags of food, personal care items, and cleaning products to 80 very grateful senior service clients twice a month**. Under the leadership of **Senior and Supportive Services Coordinator, Judy Harrison**, these wonderful men and women bring the Touch of Mercy to our community. Thank you for your tireless efforts!