

# STAR GOSPEL MISSION

The Newsletter of the Star Gospel Mission ♦ Charleston, South Carolina ♦ Fall 2017

## *Shining Brightly since 1904* *Transforming hearts and lives through Jesus Christ*



STAR GOSPEL MISSION

*Providing Over a Century of  
Christian Service to Charleston*

474 Meeting Street  
Charleston, S.C. 29403

[www.stargospelmission.org](http://www.stargospelmission.org)

The Reverend  
William K. Christian, III  
Executive Director  
Tel. 843-722-0980



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### Jesus is the Only Way

An Interview of Derek Brooks by Pastor Christian

[www.stargospelmission.org](http://www.stargospelmission.org)

Derek Brooks, who goes by "Brooks," was born in Newark, NJ where he lived until the age of 6. His father was a carpenter and his mother was a factory worker. He has two sisters, Veronica and Merele. From age 6 until age 11, he lived with his grandparents in North Charleston. His grandfather was a Holiness minister and founded two churches in South Carolina, eventually becoming a bishop in that denomination. At the age of 11 Brooks returned to live with his parents in NJ. Following the riots in 1968 and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination, Brooks said that living in NJ was not a good idea because he was getting in fights everyday. He said: "I wanted to run, I wanted to get away from there and I told my mother that I was going back to live with my Grandma in N. Charleston. My parents knew what I was talking about. It was a real bad environment! So the whole family packed up everything and moved to North Charleston." Brooks turned 60 this year.

***Brooks, how well did you know your parents and grandparents?***

I knew my Grandfather well and loved him dearly. Both Grandparents died about 7 or 8 years ago. Only my mother is still living. She and I are very close.



Derek Brooks

***What kind of influence did your mother have on your life?***

Well, for one, she put the fear of HER in me. Not the fear of God, but the fear of her. She was also very loving and nurturing.

***What prompted you to leave NJ to come here?***

It was all the fussing and fighting. In NJ people just walked up to you and started fighting. They started beating on you.

***Did that change when you came down to Charleston?***

No, they do the same thing here. Back in those days kids just liked to fight, they had a point to prove. It wasn't like in Jersey where people just walked up to you and were trying to kill you. Total strangers, kids my age, would come up to you and just tried to take you out. It wasn't drug related or anything.

***Tell me, how far did you go in school?***

In my senior year, before I graduated, I joined the Army. I wanted a job and I wanted financial security. I signed up for three years but actually did only two. I came out with a general discharge under honorable conditions.

*Continued on page 4*

## A Word from the Executive Director

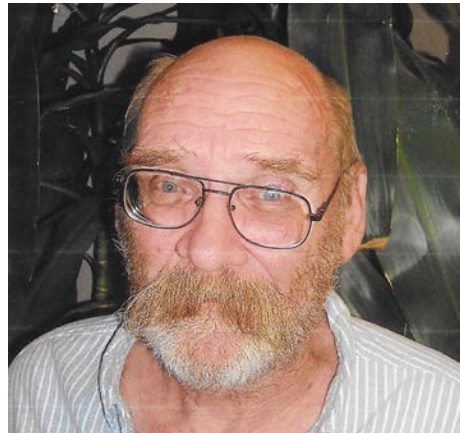


**The Rev. Bill Christian**  
*Executive Director*

Ever since 1904, The Star Gospel Mission has opened its doors to homeless men, affording them an opportunity to improve their lot in life by making some positive, life-changing decisions. Here at the Mission the men are given yet another chance at getting things right in their lives. The Mission offers these men a strong Christian environment where significant transformative change can occur so that they can begin to follow a path that will lead them to a much brighter and more productive future; it's a whole new beginning!

This past March, the Mission's manager, Joe Morrison, suffered a major stroke. Following a week in the intensive care unit at MUSC, Joe passed away on March 12. He had turned 65 just two weeks prior. Joe was a trusted and loyal employee and friend. He had lived at the Mission off and on for 8 years and served as

our manager for just over a year. Joe is greatly missed by all who knew him. May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercies of God, rest in peace.



**Joe Morrison**  
*February 20, 1951 - March 12, 2017*

Throughout the year our Board of Director's has engaged in the work of revising our Constitution and Bylaws to better serve the needs of the Mission. They are also actively engaged in planning for the future by adding additional low-income transitional and workforce housing on our campus. Our 83 Nassau Street house is still a work in progress. With the huge volume of construction going on in Charleston, finding the right builder has taken us a bit longer than we had anticipated. We hope to begin work on the house in the next few months with Luxury Simplified

doing the renovation work. (see photo on page 7)

You might also note that two of our Board members have "Emeritus" behind their names. The Board is currently considering several candidates for membership. An amazing fact that you not be aware of is that many of our Board members have served anywhere between 20 and 45 years! This is a strong testimony to the level of commitment they have toward this wonderful institution.

I would like to remind you that if you have not yet taken the opportunity to make your annual contribution to the Mission, it is my sincere hope that you will do so prior to the end of the year. I've enclosed an envelope for your convenience. If you prefer, you are also able to contribute on line by visiting our website: [www.stargospelmission.org](http://www.stargospelmission.org). All contributions to the Mission are tax deductible and will be deeply appreciated! May God richly bless you for your generosity and do remember to keep the Mission and its men in your prayers.

Faithfully yours,

*The Rev. William K. Christian, III*



**John Wesley UMC**  
Breakfast Group.



**St. John's Lutheran members** quarterly Sunday night dinner at the Mission.



**Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd Law Firm** annual food collection for Thanksgiving Dinner.



Ashley Hall Junior and Senior girls purchase new clothing for the men at Christmas.



First Scots Presbyterian Church Outreach Ministry team performing their third annual spring cleanup and landscaping at the Mission.

There is absolutely nothing we can do to make God love us any more than He already does and there is absolutely nothing we can do to make Him love us any less! God loves us as if there were only one of us to love.



Board Member David Garner, and Randy Pope preparing shrimp and grits breakfast on a Sunday morning.



Families from John Wesley UMC preparing Sunday breakfast for the men.



College of Charleston student, Jonas Baranoski doing volunteer work landscaping the 83 Nassau property.

**Why did you decide to get out after just two years?**

I wasn't too bright back in those days. Things weren't going my way. What I hesitate to tell you is that I developed a drinking problem at an early age. I guess I was around 15, and I had a bad attitude, very defiant against authority. I had to have things my way and I had to have it right now.

**What happened after you left the military?**

I went back to stay with my parents for about a year. Everybody was unemployed and we all just sat around, played cards, and went out on the town. When unemployment ran out all of us had to go back to work. I went to work for a company that did repairs on diesel engines, because that's what I did in the Army.

**Did you ever marry?**

I've never been married. From about the age of nine I decided I was never going to do that. I was talking to God and I told Him I was never going to get married. Up until that point I had never come in contact with a married couple that I envied their relationship.

I asked God to make me look twice as big as I was to my enemies.

They were always arguing and fighting, they did a lot of cussing and throwing stuff at each other. To me that seemed like chaos. Even Grandma and Grandpa, as holy as they were, had some knockdown drag out argument

**Did the drinking ever cause you problems?**

It caused me a lot of problems. I wouldn't back down from a fight. I'd get into small skirmishes. I wasn't a bad guy and the bad guys didn't bother me but one time. They didn't want to mess with me. I asked God to make me look twice as big as I was to my enemies. I noticed that big guys would be scared of me when I started talking to them and the fight would just neutralize.

**I'm hearing you say that, even though you would get into trouble, God was always a part of your life?**

Yes, that's true. My Grandparents had a strong influence on me. With my Grandfather being a Bishop it was always mandatory to go to church. If you lived in his house you were going to church and that was that.

**Have you always been a church goer?**

Up until I could make my own decisions. When I joined the Army, the whole time I was in the service I never went to church, but I still read the Bible.

I thought I was invincible. I thought I could do anything I wanted to. I didn't think twice about the consequences.

**Did your life ever get "off track?"**

My life was "off track" for about 50 years! Drugs and alcohol contributed to it, however, mainly it was my attitude. I thought I was invincible. I thought I could do anything I wanted to. I didn't think about the consequences. Alcohol fueled all of that. I started getting DUI's. I actually got kicked out of school for bringing alcohol to football games.

**Have you always been gainfully employed?**

Yes, I didn't break any of the commandments, like stealing, or killing, or robbing. I was employed by drugs and alcohol. That was my main motivation for working. I had to keep working to pay for the drugs and alcohol. That cycle continued up until 2006. In 2006 I had an attitude adjustment. I modified my behavior. I started practicing the things that people were telling me, like how to control myself, my conduct, my attitude, my

behavior and my language. I was still slipping into trouble because of the alcohol. I would consume too much and fall into a trap.

**So in 2006 you made an intentional decision to make some dramatic changes in your life.****What precipitated that?**

Trouble. I did not like trouble! I'd been to prison twice, and locked up in the county jail countless times. In 1977 I was in a car accident where I killed two people while under the influence of alcohol. It was considered reckless homicide. I spent thirteen months in prison for that. I was also sent to prison seven months for simple possession of rock cocaine. Back then I tried everything I could get my hands on, with the most available stuff. The time I spent in jail was mostly for child support, driving under the influence, getting into fist fights, and just mouthing off to the police.

I would get in trouble and I'd run to God and I'd run to church.

**Child support? You didn't mention children.**

I have one child, a boy, he's 31 right now and I'm very close to him.

CURRENT MISSION NEEDS:

Men's clothing, pillows, twin size sheets, pillowcases, towels, washcloths, paper towels, toilet paper, napkins, cleaning supplies, used books and DVDs.

*You said that 2006 was a real turning point in your life.*

Yes. I would get into trouble and I'd run to God and I'd run to church and I would get my act together and things would be alright for a little while. Then I would go back into those same behaviors and I would repeat those cycles over and over again for a period of 30 years. In 2006 I was living in Charlotte and I'd spent all my money on a hotel room. I was sitting in a Burger King across the street at 1 o'clock in the morning, and these women came in and I said Hi to them and I went and sat down with them. One of them asked me if I wanted something to eat. I turned them down, but they insisted. We started talking about what I was going through and they told me that they were going to put me up in a hotel for the night. They were some very holy women. They paid for the hotel room and I told them I'd pay them back if I knew the address where I could find them. So they gave me the address of this church. About two weeks later I went to the church service and at the end I approached them and paid them back. I enjoyed the pastor's teaching that morning. He preached

to people like me, in the situation I was in, telling you that there's always a way out. I'd heard all that before but it was different coming from him.

*Was it then that you stopped drinking and using drugs?*

No, I stopped drinking and using drugs on August 2, 2014. 30 days after that I came to the Star Gospel Mission. I was living at Crisis Ministry (now One80Place) and the Old Central AA program was right next door to the Mission. Several of the guys in AA stayed at the Mission. I felt this would be a step up for me from Crisis Ministry.

I believe God led me to AA and AA led me back to God, because it's a spiritual program. I still go whenever I get a chance.

*Did the Mission work out well for you?*

It worked out very well. I was able to abide by the rules. I made friends with just about everybody. I still have a good job; I work at

the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center. In fact, they were the ones who were instrumental with me getting off drugs and alcohol. When I finally made up my mind that I wasn't going to do that anymore, because I'd gotten fed up with the whole thing, the VA helped get me on the right track.

*Did you do the 30-day rehab. program at the Charleston VA?*

No. I'd done programs there before but what they were doing didn't work. It only works for people who are really determined. So I went to the VA in Salisbury, NC and I did the 12 step program. That's what worked for me! I believe God led me to AA and AA led me back to God, because it's a spiritual program. I still go whenever I get a chance.

*Did the year that you lived at the Mission help you on your spiritual journey?*

Yes, it did help me on my journey. It's still helping me to this day. I was very comfortable here. I get along with people and I'm surprised that people take to me right off. They walk up to me and call me by name and I never remember seeing them before. I love people, I love everybody!

My spirituality grows day by day no matter where I am, and this place was a real shot in the arm for me!

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*Why do you come back to church here every Sunday even though you're no longer living here?*

I like your messages and I like you personally. Your messages are what I need to get me through the week. Your teachings reaffirm what I'm thinking. A lot of times you are talking about the very things I need to hear; it's like you're talking directly to me personally.

*I've noticed that you always bring a few of your friends with you. Why is that?*

When I talk to people and I get to know them over a period of time, I invite them to come to church with me. I feel compelled to invite them to church with me where they could hear something that would be beneficial to their soul.

**Is there anything that we've left out of this story?**

We've left God's mercies and His grace out of this story. I completely surrendered to His commandments and His ordinances and started paying my tithes, praying every morning religiously, reading the scriptures, and I came out from nothing in about seven months. In seven months I had everything that I could possibly need at my disposal. I give God the credit for that. You know, I'm a goof off, I couldn't do this stuff myself (much laughter)!

It gives me comfort, it gives me encouragement, it gives me direction, it gives me hope!

**Do you believe it was God's power, that is, the power of the Holy Spirit that made this dynamic transformation occur in your life?**

I do believe that and I also

believe that it was a lot of prayers from my grandparents and their friends. Even the scriptures say that "no man comes to the Son unless he be drawn by the Father." And I believe that I was drawn to Jesus by the Holy Spirit. This change occurred by simply hearing the word of God and having faith in it!

**And what does God's word do for you?**

It gives me comfort, it gives me encouragement, it gives me direction, it gives me hope! It changed my human condition. My ulti-

mate hope is to be with Jesus.

**Do you think the Mission has the ability to help men get their lives back on the right track as it did for you?**

If they have the desire to get on the right track, then this is the place for them. Jesus once said: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no man can come to the Father but by Me." There's really no other way. Not Buddha, not Mohammed, not Hare Krishna, not Confucius, not anybody. Just Jesus Christ! He's the ONLY WAY! ∞

There's really no other way. Just Jesus Christ! He's the only way!



Charleston Southern University students preparing a Saturday evening dinner.



First Scots Presbyterian members prepare a Sunday evening dinner for the men.



Youth Minister, David Boudolf, and children delivering Christmas cookies.



Tamera Hawsey and her children bringing home made Christmas cookies to the men.



Members of John Wesley UMC gather to prepare breakfast for Mission Residents.



John Wesley UMC prepared and served Thanksgiving Day dinner last year.



83 Nassau Street abandoned house prior to beginning renovation work. The house will be completed in 2018 with four studio apartments for men currently residing in the Mission's dormitory.



The 2016 Post and Courier Good Cheer Fund food gift card giveaway at Star Gospel Mission. Over 800 people received gift cards worth \$70 each.



Board Members, clergy, police officers, community leaders, and residents volunteer to assist in the distribution of gift cards on the Monday after Thanksgiving.

Thanks to those who provide regular support to

**STAR GOSPEL MISSION**

- First Scots Presbyterian Church
- Grace Episcopal Cathedral
- John Wesley United Methodist Church
- John's Island Presbyterian Church
- Christ our King Catholic Church
- St. John's Lutheran Church
- Second Presbyterian Church
- Bethel United Methodist Church
- St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
- Trinity United Methodist Church
- Harbor View Presbyterian Church
- The Cathedral of St. Luke and St. Paul
- The Seacoast Church
- The College of Charleston
- The Ashley Halls Girls School
- New Hope Treatment Center
- The Verhagen Foundation
- The Saul Alexander Fund
- Morgan Stanley Financial Services
- Post and Courier Good Cheer Fund
- Washington Light Infantry
- The New England Society
- The St. Andrew's Society
- Charleston Exchange Club Auxiliary
- Trident United Way
- Strickland Marine Agency
- Royall Hardware, Inc.
- Haynsworth, Sinkler, Boyd
- I'On Family Dentistry
- Bi Lo Grocery Stores
- Trader Joe's



## STAR GOSPEL MISSION

474 Meeting Street  
Charleston, S.C. 29403

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**Obadiah Dugan and friends  
evangelizing Charleston.**

*Circa 1907*

The Star Gospel Mission was established in 1904 in the old Star Vaudeville Theater. The theater was closed in 1902 by the city fathers because of the undesirable element it brought into the area. Obadiah Dugan, a successful furniture dealer who'd experienced a dramatic conversion while attending a Billy Sunday Tent Revival, determined to devote the rest of his life to serving people who needed spiritual, psychological and physical assistance.

Dugan founded the Mission after requesting Charleston's mayor to allow him to use the theater as a shelter for homeless men, women and children. The Mission opened its doors on April 24, 1904 with more than 500 people in attendance at its' first worship service led by Dugan. After continuing his mission work among the homeless at the Star Theater for 16 years, Dugan acquired the abandoned Holy Rosary Roman Catholic Church at 474 Meeting Street, which is where the Mission has been located ever since.

Upon Obadiah's death in 1936, he was succeeded by his son, The Rev. Ernest Dugan, a Methodist minister. Ernest retired in 1973 and was succeeded by a third generation Dugan, Ernest, Jr., also a Methodist minister. Ernest, Jr. retired in 1986, bringing the Dugan family's 82 years of leadership to a close (since then a member of the Dugan family has always served on our Board of Director's).

Under the very capable leadership of J. Douglas Donehue, former editor of the Post and Courier newspaper, the work of the Mission continued until his passing in 2006. Doug was highly instrumental in assuring the Mission's survival and reconstruction in the aftermath of Hurricane Hugo in 1989. In 2006, the Board of Director's elected The Rev. William Christian, an Anglican priest, to become their fifth executive director. Under Bill's leadership, the Mission has begun a whole new chapter in its' history by expanding their influence in the City of Charleston through the acquisition and development of additional property and transitional housing for successful graduates of the Mission.