

Star Gospel Mission

Fall 2011

The Newsletter of the Star Gospel Mission, Charleston, South Carolina

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

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Executive Director
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Being molded by God

Based on an interview conducted by Pastor Christian with John Doherty.

John, tell me about your formative years growing up in Jersey City, NJ?

As a kid, I was in the foster care system in Jersey. The state took me away from my parents when I was eight. My father was an alcoholic, very abusive, he used to beat me a lot so they took me away. My mother was also an alcoholic. She took a lot of the beatings herself.

What happened after that?

Mostly I was running the streets as a kid, doing drugs, drinking, getting into trouble, getting into fights, and some violent stuff with the police and other people.

Are there any major events in your past that you might want to share?

When I turned 18 I tried to join the army and they wouldn't let me in.

Why was that?

I'd been living at a juvenile group home and I'd gotten into an argument with a teacher. I went underneath the school because it was up on concrete blocks. We used to burn our names into the wood with Bic lighters. The teacher said that he thought I was trying to burn down the school, which I wasn't. I had no idea that they charged me

with arson at the time. So when I tried to join the army I went to the judge and told him that I didn't even know that they had convicted me of anything. The judge said, "well, it stands, I can't change it," so they wouldn't let me in. That was really major for



John Doherty

me because it was the first time in my life that I wanted to do something to change and I kind of hit a brick wall. That's when I really gave up on my life, I just hated everything and everyone; there was a lot of anger in me.

Where did that kind of thinking lead you?

It led me to prison. I was getting little "skid bits", like six months or a year for fighting, mostly fights with the

police. Then I started getting into stealing cars. Everything I did was related to either being drunk or getting high on drugs. I never did anything sober or straight. That was my way of dealing with life. If something got hard I would either get high or drink.

Besides the fights and stealing cars, was there any other trouble that you got into?

Yes, in 1989 it all came to an end. I'd been working up in Connecticut doing a restoration on a porch and I got into a fight with the owner of the house. He passed away as a result of my actions, but I don't even remember it. I had drunk a fifth of Vodka and did some heroin so I was out of it. That happened on a Friday night and I was arrested on a Sunday in New York. They sentenced me to 25 years and I served one month shy of 20 years. I got out in June of 2009.

When you were released did you come to Charleston?

I was actually on my way to Florida to try to get some work with the oil cleanup down there. I decided to stop over for the night in Charleston. I started drinking with

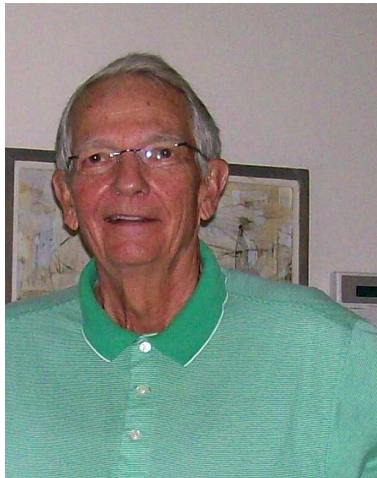
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From the Executive Director

The end of the year is traditionally a time for reviewing ones financial matters, including plans to make charitable contributions to organizations one believes in and knows are doing the most good with the resources they are entrusted with. For over 107 years the Star Gospel Mission has been serving the homeless and needy throughout the greater Charleston area in a significant way, by assisting them with housing, food, clothing, rent and utilities assistance, emergency medical and transportation needs, and a wide array of other services. Since we are designated not only as a Church but also as a 501c3 organization, all contributions made to the Mission are tax deductible. When you make a contribution to the Mission, I guarantee that a letter of acknowledgment will always be sent to you within one week of receiving your gift. As you consider making charitable gifts between now and the end of the year, remember that any gifts you make now can generate income tax deductions that could help reduce your taxes for 2011. With many of the proposed changes to federal tax laws, giving this year may never save you more! Only gifts made by Dec. 31 can help reduce the amount of taxes you will owe next April. So please consider making a contribution to the Star Gospel Mission by years end. Know that 100% of the resources we receive at the Mission come from individuals, churches, foundations and civic organizations. NOT ONE PENNY is received from local, state or federal government agencies! Your generosity will help transform the lives of men who are in need of a second chance and a brand new beginning. Always remember that the primary beneficiary of the gift is the giver.

The Rev. William Christian

Always remember, never look back, keep your eyes on the future and not on the past.



Samuel S. Dugan

A Life Well Lived

In remembrance of Samuel S. Dugan 1929—2011

A faithful Board member, Sam Dugan, passed away on October 10 at the age of 82. Sam was born on April 18, 1929 in Conway, SC. He graduated from the Citadel in 1950. He served in the United States Army as a pilot in Korea. Sam was a retired Executive from IBM and lived in Mt. Pleasant with his wife Pat; they were married for 57 years. Sam was also a member of the Exchange Club of Charleston. Sam was a part of the Dugan family legacy and their integral involvement with the Mission.

Jr., then ran the Mission until 1986. Since then, another one of Sam's brothers and a sister served on the Board of Director's. When Sam returned to Charleston he took his turn at serving on the Mission's Board thus maintaining the continuity of having a Dugan associated with the Mission since it's' inception.

Sam was deeply committed to making sure that the ministry his grandfather began would continue to change lives for the better for many years to come. Sam loved the Mission and, as much as anything in the story of his life, a life well-lived, this was part of his shining legacy. May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, rest in peace.

Sam's grandfather, Obadiah Dugan, founded the Mission in 1904. Sam's father, The Rev. Ernest Dugan took over the reins of the Mission in 1936 and served as Superintendent until 1973. Sam's brother, The Rev. Ernest Dugan,



A group from St. Stephen's Episcopal Church bringing Christmas gifts for residents of the Mission.

Always remember that: **THE PRIMARY BENEFICIARY OF THE GIFT IS THE GIVER.** Please join us in keeping the ministry of the Star Gospel Mission thriving by sending your tax deductible contributions in the envelope enclosed.

The bumps in the road of life are not bumps they ARE the road.

Being molded by God (cont. from page 4)

Based on an interview conducted by Pastor Christian with John Doherty.

Tell me about St. Andrew's and what they've done for you in your spiritual walk.

Kurtz Smith invited me to go on a men's retreat. During that retreat I received word that my father had passed away. I made a decision that if I couldn't find a way to forgive my father I couldn't go back to St. Andrews anymore because I would have been a hypocrite. Being forgiven and given a second chance by society and God for taking a persons life, if I couldn't forgive my own father, it wouldn't have been right for me to go back.

So did you?

I did. At five o'clock in the morning I was out on the beach by myself, and I was crying and talking to God. I was pretty much begging Him saying that I didn't know how to forgive him for the things that he did to my mother and me. Somehow God put it into my heart to forgive him and I did so that very day.

Do you feel that God has forgiven you for your past?

Absolutely. With everything that's been given to me in the past 14 months, even though I've fallen a couple of times, I know that God has truly blessed me with so many good people.

It's as though He took the anger out of you and replaced it with love. Where do you see this leading you?

Eventually I'd like to become a facilitator for "Life Plan" because that was the beginning of change for me in prison. These people took the time to teach me about who I was and why I became that person. They said that that's not why God created me. I now know that it's my duty to share my story with people and to help

them to understand that anger and hatred and the anti-social behavior is just our way of coping, our way of surviving. We don't truly want to hurt people, we don't want to be alcoholics and drug addicts but that's the only answer we've ever had or ever known.

So you want to give back by sharing your story with people who are incarcerated?

Yes, because it will teach them that God truly does have the power to transform your life if you will let Him.

Where do you see yourself right now and where do you see your life going in the future?

Right now I consider myself a lump of clay. I believe that I'm being molded into what God created me to be. I'm starting school in January at Trident Tech., and eventually I'd like to start my own heating and air conditioning business.

John, is there anything else you'd like to say?

I'm still learning, I still make mistakes, but 99 percent of the time my thoughts are about what I can do for someone else, not about what I want or how I can get it. It's all about what can I do to help other people?

All things work together for good for those who love God.



Junior and Senior class girls from the Ashley Hall School provide gifts for Mission residents each Christmas



Members of Woodmen of the World donating a commercial refrigerator to the Mission. L to R Pastor Christian, Tim Houlahan, Don Molineu (State Manager), Mike Shealy (National Director), Keith Bunting.

Thanks to those who provide regular support

- First Scots Presbyterian Church
- Second Presbyterian Church
- The French Huguenot Church
- Grace Episcopal Church
- St. Michael's Episcopal Church
- St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
- Holy Communion Episcopal Church
- Congregation Beth Elohim
- Bethel United Methodist Church
- John Wesley United Methodist Church
- Trinity United Methodist Church
- St. Johannes Lutheran Church
- Catholic Charities of Charleston
- Good Cheer Fund of the Post and Courier
- Washington Light Infantry
- New England Society
- The St. Andrew's Society
- The German Friendly Society
- Strickland Marine Agency
- Hughes Lumber Company
- Piggly Wiggly Carolina
- The Guy E. Beatty Foundation
- The Verhagen Foundation
- The Benson Family Foundation
- The Coastal Carolina Foundation
- The Exchange Club of Charleston
- The Saul Alexander Fund
- Ashley Hall Girls School
- High Cotton Restaurant
- Haynsworth, Sinkler and Boyd
- St Andrew's Church
- St Matthew's Lutheran Church
- Woodmen of the World



Star Gospel Mission

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Over a Century of Christian Service to Charleston



Residents and staff of the Star Gospel Mission, Nov. 2011.

An Exciting New Expansion of the Star Gospel

The Board of Director's is very excited to announce the purchase of an abandoned home on Nassau Street, a property located directly behind the Mission complex. Star Gospel currently owns one home on Nassau Street which is also located directly alongside Mission property.

Our strategic plan is to begin developing these two single family dwellings this coming year by restoring and converting each home into four studio apartments that can be utilized for additional transitional housing for low income individuals. These apartments would then be leased to current residents of the Mission and other needy individuals at an affordable below current market value rate. This would enable them to establish a line of credit and thereby move

beyond transitional housing into the next level on the housing continuum, that of renting an apartment or home on their own at current market value.

The purchase of this home was made possible, in large part, by a very generous gift from The Guy E. Beatty Foundation and through a large donation from the Exchange Club of Charleston. We expect to begin the design and construction phase in early 2012. Teams from local churches may also be utilized during the construction phase, much like Habitat for Humanity does. Any additional financial support you might be able to provide will go a long way toward making this goal become a reality!



89 Nassau Street property to be renovated into 4 studio apartments.

JUST DO THE RIGHT THING, WHICH MEANS, DON'T DO THE WRONG THING!

Current Mission Needs
Men's clothing, pillows, twin size sheets and pillow cases, towels and washcloths, paper towels, toilet paper, napkins, meats and canned vegetables, cleaning supplies, toiletries, light bulbs.

GOD'S GOODNESS IS BIGGER THAN OUR BADNESS. GOD'S POWER TO FORGIVE IS GREATER THAN OUR ABILITY TO SIN.