

Special Thanks

The National Homeless Persons' Memorial Service is held with the help of many people. We want to thank those who contributed their time and energy to this year's service.

All of the speakers who gave of their time, talent, and selves.

All of the candleholders and other volunteers.

Jack Cooney for his work on the memorial book.

Just Cause Catering and Fazoli's Catering for providing unch for our homeless and formerly homeless neighbors.

Christ Church Cathedral for hosting the service once again.

For all those people in the community who share a commitment to working together toward ending homelessness.

Information about CHIP

The Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and prevention (CHIP) is a not-for-profit agency working to assist homeless and near-homeless persons and the agencies that serve them. Our mission is to mobilize the community to work together to end homelessness in Indianapolis. The *Blueprint to End Homelessness* provides a set of strategies that have been proven effective in preventing and ending homelessness.

Join in the fight to end homelessness by helping to educate, advocate, donate, and volunteer. This is a chance to make a true difference for a homeless neighbor and our community. There are many ways for people to get involved. Contact CHIP today for more information.



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National Homeless Persons' Memorial Service

*Friday, December 21, 2007
Christ Church Cathedral
11:00 a.m.*



*A Time for Remembrance
A Season for Hope*

Order of Service

Organ Prelude

David Sinden
Christ Church Cathedral

Master of Ceremony

Bill Moreau
Barnes & Thornburg LLP
Chair, CHIP Board of Directors

Welcome & Prayer

The Very Rev. Stephen E. Carlson
Christ Church Cathedral

Responsive Reading

Sandy Jeffers, Executive Director
Pathway to Recovery

Speakers

The Honorable Becky Skillman, Lt. Governor of Indiana
William Ross, Formerly Homeless Neighbor

Musical Selection

Members of the Christ Church Cathedral Girls Choir
Under the direction of Dr. Frederick Burgomaster
Bless the Lord, O My Soul by Ruth Watson Henderson

Speakers

The Honorable Bart Peterson, Mayor of Indianapolis
Joy McKee, Formerly Homeless Neighbor

Musical Selection

Members of the Christ Church Cathedral Girls Choir
Under the direction of Dr. Frederick Burgomaster
Deep Peace by John Rutter

Reading of the Names and Candlelight Ceremony

Bill Moreau

Tolling of the Bells/Moment of Silence

(Tolled for the number of homeless and formerly homeless persons who have died this year, and one more for those known only to God)

Facts about homelessness

- Thirty-five people died in Marion County in 2006 who were homeless.
- 300 people died in Marion Country since 1996 who were homeless.
- 6,000-10,000 of our fellow neighbors are estimated to experience homelessness during the course of a year.
- An estimated 45,000 people in Indianapolis live on the edge of becoming homeless each year.
- Families make up about 26% of the local homeless population.
- Up to 16% of the homeless people living on the streets on any given night are veterans.
- One out of every five homeless individuals from the 2007 Street Count was identified as a victim of domestic violence.
- Homeless neighbors with severe mental illnesses and chronic substance abuse make up 48% of the population.
- 3,000 to 4,000 children experience homelessness in our community annually.
- The total homeless population counted on one day in Indianapolis is around 2,000.
- Homelessness results from many factors, including a lack of affordable housing, low-paying jobs, addictions, and mental illness.

Winter Needs

This winter, local shelter and outreach teams are in short supply of warm clothing and non-perishable food items. Working in partnership with other homeless service providers, Wheeler Mission Ministries is storing public donations of these items. Donations can include: blankets, jackets, hats, and gloves; and single serving, easy-to-open, sports drinks, juice boxes, sausages and beef sticks, puddings, fruit cups, peanut butter crackers, cereal or breakfast bars, instant coffee and individual servings of chips and nuts. To donate, please visit the Wheeler Mission at 245 N. Delaware Street. Donors should specify the contributions are for the Winter Relief for Homeless efforts. Monetary donations are being accepted at the back of the church to support winter overflow shelters and street outreach efforts.

The offering taken during today's service will go towards winter needs.

A Time for Remembrance A Season for Hope

Each year, people in Indianapolis gather, along with many others in cities across the country, to observe the National Homeless Persons' Memorial Service. It is a time to remember those persons who were homeless in our city and have passed away. This memorial service offers a time to remember those who have perished and to reflect that in working together to end homelessness, we are endeavoring to save lives.

Tonight, most of us will be peacefully sleeping in our own beds in our well heated homes, but some will be sleeping on a floor or a humble cot in a shelter while others will be huddling in the darkness and trying to keep from freezing. We gather here on the winter solstice to draw attention to the plight of many of our neighbors who need help and to call for greater action on their behalf.

The winter solstice is the longest night of the year, but it is also the turning point in the season with shorter nights to come. It is a time for remembrance and a time for hope. Let us hope for brighter days ahead.

A Wake Up

I start my day with gratitude and thanks. I continue my day with excitement of what I can accomplish and learn on this new path. I sit still for a minute and listen to the silence. I make a plan, but I know I can change it; or change with it, if needed. Life still throws curves; however, I'm learning to follow the road of life instead of stopping or crashing. I'm much more aware of myself than ever before.

-An excerpt from the poem "A Wake Up" originally published in the ACES Expressions, Spring 2004, Vol. IV, No. 2.

Written by a formerly homeless person, who graduated from the Action Coalition to Ensure Stability program in Indianapolis, IN.

Responsive Reading

(Leader)

To each of you who has perished, this year and in previous years -

(All)

We will remember you...

(Leader)

We gather together to bring attention to the shame of homelessness and how it robs our neighbors of their hope and their lives.

(All)

We will remember you...

(Leader)

To those who have been lost on our city streets, in the alleyways, abandoned buildings and sometimes even in our hearts -

(All)

We will remember you...

(Leader)

For your strength, courage and perseverance, we will celebrate your life and mourn your loss. Lest we never forget your struggle -

(All)

We will remember you...

(Leader)

In your memory we will rekindle hope and recommit ourselves to fight for the cause. We will work as individuals, through organizations and as part of our communities to put an end to homelessness - now and forever.

(All)

We will remember you...

(Leader)

From the writings of St. Augustine:

"Hope has two beautiful daughters, Anger at the way things are, and Courage to change the way things are."

In your memory we will seek to change the way things are, and -

(All)

We will remember you.

A day of remembrance in honor of those people who were homeless and have died in 2007

Anonymous
Larry Bingham
Carl Black
David Cody
Herbert Coomer
Travis Crowe
John Doan
Carla Foster
Donel Germany, III
Mike Marzalek
Kevin Massey
Lelia Nixon
Charles E. Oldham
Alexander Reaves
James Robertson
Phillip Rondeau
Richard Smallman
Sandra Stacy
Dennis Wencke

The Stories behind the Names

Two formerly homeless people are speaking during today's memorial service: William Ross and Joy McKee. We thank them for sharing their experiences with us and for helping us understand how a combination of services and housing helped to end their struggles with homelessness. May they remind us of the thousands of other people who need our help every year.

William Ross says that he never felt like he had a home of his own. With little connection to family or loved ones, Ross began taking drugs at the age of thirteen to have a sense of belonging with others.

In 1999, his drug behaviors landed him in prison. While in prison, Ross earned his Bachelor's Degree from Ball State University. However, upon leaving prison with no money, no social supports, and no job prospects, Ross found himself homeless again.

However, this time was different. Ross received shelter from Wheeler Mission Ministries. His case manager from Horizon House connected him with a variety of resources including Volunteers of America, who helped him find housing. This support gave Ross the stability and support he needed to be able to work, save money, and eventually move into his own home.

Today, Ross is pursuing a Master's Degree in Urban Ministry at Martin University and running Peter's House, a co-op housing program in Indianapolis for the homeless. He understands how important housing has been in his life, and he is proud that he can help others in need.

Joy McKee was sent to a foster home at a very young age because of abuse in her family. She continued to be abused and eventually ran away at the age of 18. Without any family or support, she got involved with drugs and alcohol.

For the next 30, years McKee was in and out of physically and emotionally abusive relationships and she continued to use drugs and alcohol. Ten years ago this lifestyle led her to homelessness, and she stayed at almost every shelter in Indianapolis and on the streets.

In November 2006, McKee went to The Julian Center. She had reached a point where she knew her life was not going to change unless *she* changed it. She stayed at The Julian Center's shelter and then in their transitional housing. Over time she started receiving counseling through The Julian Center and drug and alcohol treatment through Fairbanks. She has remained sober for three years.

With the help of The Julian Center and Homeless Initiative Program (HIP), McKee now has a part-time job. She also has her own apartment through Wishard's Shelter-Plus-Care program.