



# LIVING WATER MINISTRY NETWORK

*Serving Men Paroling from Prison and At-Risk Youth*  
Volume 33, Issue 2, February 2019

**OPEN HEARTS,  
OPEN HANDS**



*“Create in me a pure heart,  
O God, and renew a  
steadfast spirit within me.  
My sacrifice, O God, is a  
broken spirit; a broken and  
contrite heart you, God, will  
not despise.”  
Psalm 51:10, 17*

What is one thing that God has removed from your life since you opened your heart to Him?

How have you been able to open your heart and hands to God and to others?

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**WE** will consider the theme “Open Heart, Open Hands” in this issue. We open our heart to God and the work of Jesus Christ in our life. Then, we open our hands and let Him remove the things that bring Him dishonor and hurt our relationship to Him. We let Him fill our hands with things that please Him. We also open our hearts to let others in—family, friends, co-workers, and roommates. We open our hands to them so they can hold us accountable and encourage our actions or correct our behavior. We open our hands to help, assist, and inspire others.

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**YOUR PRESENCE IS REQUESTED  
AT THE**

**Living Water Ministry Network**

**Annual Fundraising Banquet  
“Treasure in Jars of Clay”**

**Thursday, March 21, 2019, 6:15 pm**

**English Hills Ballroom  
5179 West River Dr.  
Comstock Park, MI 49321**

**RSVP at [www.livingwaterpmn.org](http://www.livingwaterpmn.org)**

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We are urging you to attend this annual event that showcases the work of this much-needed ministry. Often prisoners are overlooked by society; but we know they were important to Jesus. He came to proclaim freedom to the prisoners. He came and lent a compassionate hand to “the least of these” in the generation in which He lived. He has given us the task of being His hands and feet to our generation. It is not too late to register. **Invite some friends and sign up on-line today.** You will leave blessed and encouraged by seeing how God’s work transforms men’s lives. **Make an effort to sign up by the end of February.**

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*“Teach me your way, Lord, that I may rely on your faithfulness;  
give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.” Psalm 86:11*

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### FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Here is an exercise for you. Make a fist and hold your closed hand in front of you, looking at your fingers touching the palm of your hand. A closed hand is symbolic of a closed heart. The first half of my life represented a closed hand. I was doing life for myself. I felt I could do it all because I was in control. I thought I had friends, but they were only for convenience and making poor choices. I never really felt at peace, something always seemed to be missing. I know my mother and grandmother always prayed for me, but God was not in my life at this time. As I look back, God was always there watching over me. It was I who chose to walk away from Him. I had kept my heart and hands closed.

Here is another exercise for you. Open your hand and reach it out, palm up. An open hand is symbolic of an open heart. In the second half of my life, I keep my hand and my heart open. Today, I am willing to give and willing to receive God's love and God's provision. I am filled with blessings and gratitude as I disciple others.

When a person opens their hand because they need a hand up, and they receive the help need. Unfortunately, what happens is a person closes their hand because everything is o.k. now, and the blessing is missed. This is not the life Christ has taught us to live. If you keep your hand open, God will continue to fill your hand to overflowing and you will have more than enough to give back that which was freely given you. *"Ask and it shall be given you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."* Matthew 7:7

**Pastor Jim Bright**

### SINS FORGIVEN, LOVE SHOWN

I received Christ as my Savior when I was around 12 years old. I had a reasonable life; nothing really to complain about. There were ups and downs, a divorce after 30 years of marriage. I was never really close to God until after going to jail. I felt terrible guilt, shame and condemnation. I had hit bottom. I pled with God to forgive me and take away his condemnation from me—He did. I owed God a tremendous debt.

In Luke 7:47, Jesus says to the woman who anointed His feet, "I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love." Since I have been forgiven much, I love God much in return. Because of this change in my life, I am being healed. I subsequently gave God my commitment to serve Him in any way He leads me. Thank you, God!

**Resident Writer, D. A. W.**

### OPEN HEART, OPEN HANDS

One thing removed from my life since I have given my heart to Christ, is the bad habit of not forgiving myself for the poor choices I have made that also resulted in sins. Because Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins, I am forgiven, as it is written. And this applies to my faith. This change has encouraged me to open my heart and hands to God by praying and communicating with Him in a closer relationship. I allow God to take charge of things around me and watch His works fulfilled. Acknowledging His authority in my life makes my life easier.

Opening my heart and hands to others around me allows me to be an example to the standards of Christ's expectations. My love for others, through Christ, shows a peace desired which I believe is in all of us. Showing and having compassion for others has shown me to have compassion for myself. Jesus walks with me and guides me along the way. I give thanks to my Lord Jesus Christ.

**Resident Writer, P. M.**

### HEART AND HAND

This was a tough question for me to answer. I was born a Christian and confirmed the same for myself, as is customary in my faith, at age seven. I remember walking with God in faith for most of my life. There came a point in my late 30's though, where the heart and hand that God had filled with abundant grace closed a bit. My own pride, at the life I had built and lived, took up a lot of space in my heart. After a long fall, I have rededicated my heart to the Lord.

What has my renewed commitment to Jesus done for me? I feel that he has taken that pride away from my heart and continues to do so. I am thankful for every small thing now and realize more than ever I am NOTHING without my God and Savior. Because of this renewal, I feel I am less harsh in my thoughts towards the world around me. I may be leery of another, or perhaps not like them, but I love them as their brother in Christ. I cannot judge them or condemn them. As Christians, sometimes we tend to do this. I try to help others and reach out in ways I never would have before. Thank you, Lord for taking my pride and replacing it with humility.

**Resident Writer, R. C.**

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*"Be openhanded and freely lend to others whatever they need. I command you to be openhanded toward your fellow mankind who are poor and needy in your community."* Deuteronomy 15:8, 11

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### REPAIR FOR THE CRACKED POT

We all are a cracked jar of clay, or broken vessel, as the result of our sins and poor choices. In prison the light had grown very dim, barely flickering, and most of the time hidden. In 2012, I was baptized! From that day forward I made a new personal prayer and commitment, to allow the Holy Spirit to repair the cracks and breaks and heal the wounds of my past. I began looking forward to my new future through daily prayer, reading and studying the Bible.

Christ has given me a great opportunity to open my heart and hands to help others. I share what He has taught me as I learn and grow in my spiritual walk. I can share my light with others, to help them heal and give them hope for tomorrow and eternity. I believe this is what LWMN is all about!

**Resident Writer, C. C.**

### REMOVED FOR MY GOOD

What is one thing that God has removed from my life since I opened my heart to Him? The Lord removed from me inappropriate behaviors, controlling others and situations, possessiveness, instability, betraying people close to me, and breaking promises, lying to get out of trouble for the things I did, and living in secret.

I have learned and applied Biblical principles to better my life, to change my heart, opinions, views, way of thinking, behavior, and attitudes. I now listen to people, respect their input, and apply myself to helping others instead of hurting them. I respect people now. I show love in an appropriate way.

**Resident Writer, D. L. M.**

### GOOD JOB, FAITHFUL SERVANT

What really freed me from being closed-handed was going to church and believing, praying and learning about Jesus, who died on the cross for not only my sins, but for everyone's sins. For John 3:16 says, "*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, for whoever believes in Him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life.*" I remember there was a time I did not go to church, and it did not feel right to me. Now I have been going to church; I love to go. It makes me happy every time.

Since I have opened my hand and heart to God, I have been more caring to others and willing to help people out when they need it. I have been more of a loving person in Christ. I am more accepting to change and doing God's will. When God calls and I am at that gate, He says, "Good job, faithful servant". Then I know I did my part.

**Resident Writer, W. W.**

### TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS

Years ago, I prayed to God to deliver me from my addiction and I prayed often. I was given many warning signs. Every close call told me I cannot keep doing this. I felt I could tell no one. It was just a matter of time before I would get caught. I felt very alone. Who would be accepting to know I have a problem? No one will understand it. I must do this alone; I must control it. The more I told myself these words, the more often I failed. I had to hit bottom to escape the self-made prison of the secret life I was living. God did deliver me, and it was not the solution I wanted either.

There is no simple answer as to how I got so deep into the addiction, but there is a simple answer to where I am now. God loved me so much that He disciplines me as His own son (Hebrews 12:5, 6). He has freed me from my secret life. I now live an honest lifestyle. I speak the truth. I show a positive attitude. I catch myself now. I pay attention to my feelings. I notice what words I choose to use. These things were not that important to me in the past. With that, I pay attention to what others say and what they do. I choose to be involved in my church. I choose to sing in the choir. I am a child of God, and I want others to see it in me. And it will not end here.

**Resident Writer, D. W.**

### JESUS IN MY HEART

Since the Lord came into my life, He has removed many things. Not the least of which was pride, envy, and anger. Pride was fueled by envy. I needed to have the best, be the best, and be looked up to as the best. When that could not come, or would not happen, that is when the anger would set in. And in my self-righteous mind, I often took vengeance upon my opposers.

God has successfully removed the scales from my eyes and showed me a better way. He has removed my heart of stone and replaced it with a heart of flesh, full of love and understanding. My main desire now is to spend my life serving God and serving others the way He would have me do. This is truly what brings me joy and a sense of peace I never had before. Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul.

**Resident Writer, R. B.**

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*"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."*  
Ezekiel 36:26, 27

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## OPEN HAND AND OPEN HEART

The first thing that God removed from my life after turning it over to Him was my selfish heart. In the past it was “all about me” and what I could get out of every situation that presented itself to me. That all changed after I received Christ as my Lord and Savior. He gave me a caring and giving heart instead of the cold and hard heart I had. He also took a lot of my desire of bad habits (smoking, pornography, drinking) and turned them into good habits (helping people in need, getting involved in church and other Christian programs). He also gave me the desire to develop a close relationship with Him.

With all these things that the Lord has removed from me, I have been able to be used by Him to do the work He has called me to do. Now I am working with Living Water Ministry Network, helping the men get acclimated back into society, and advising them on how to deal with issues that come about. God has also put me in a position to help in the ministry alongside others.

Most of all, with my new heart, my relationship with God has become stronger than I ever imagined. This helps me continue to acknowledge Him in all my ways and trust Him to guide me and to love Him with all my heart.

May God bless you and keep you, may He make His face shine upon you, and give you peace.

**Kurt Flier, Resident Manager**

## EMPTY HANDS, FULL HEART

I was asked, “What is one thing that God has removed from your life since you opened your heart to Him?” I believe my Lord took away two things—my desire for drugs and my ability to stand alone.

Drugs are no problem anymore. I don’t miss them. My ability to stand alone? If you are a follower of Jesus, then you are a reader of His Word. His Word says that life is all about people—being with people, spreading His Word, serving others, dying to self and, above all, not being a loner.

How do I serve Christ, serve others and not be a loner? How do I accept others in my life? I have shown an open hand of love to others by still being here, asking for help and letting others help me get to where I need to be.

**Resident Writer, S. W.**

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*“God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.”*

Hebrews 6:10

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### CONTACT US:

Living Water Ministry Network  
PO Box 566  
Comstock Park, MI 49321

Email: [pastorjim@livingwaterpmn.org](mailto:pastorjim@livingwaterpmn.org)

Website: [www.livingwaterpmn.org](http://www.livingwaterpmn.org)

Please consider making a generous gift to help support and encourage the men God has entrusted to LWMN. Please make donation checks payable to: Living Water Ministry Network (LWMN) or visit the web site. Your contributions are tax deductible to this 501(c)3 non-profit ministry organization.

**HAVE YOU SIGNED-UP  
FOR THE ANNUAL FUNDRAISING  
BANQUET YET?**

