Every person has a story, and every story matters to God.

60th Anniversary
Special Edition Magazine
“God Will Move Into New Mission,” declared newspaper man Glenn Shelton on April 14, 1958. Mr. Shelton referred to Reverend Dick Hogan stepping out in faith to open a homeless shelter without any capital to fund the ministry. In 1958, Faith City Mission came into being at 7th and Ohio St., Wichita Falls, above Hornsby Heavy Hardware. The ministry was a branch effort of a mission with the same name in Amarillo, Texas. In the beginning, the ministry was only for transient men. Rev. Dick and Bee Hogan, the founders of both the Amarillo and Wichita Falls missions, personally worked at the Ohio Street facility in its early years. The sign above the door told struggling people, “If you are hungry, do not beg or steal. Come eat with us.”

In 1963, the mission’s leaders realized there were no rooms to meet the needs of families. The leaders started praying and developing plans to increase the services to minister to families. In 1967, Rev. Jim Cook became the superintendent. Mr. Cook helped the expansion of Faith City Mission.

You are the reason we are able to celebrate 60 years of serving the homeless.
SUCCESS FROM THE BEGINNING

George Chambers is one of the first men who received help from Wichita Falls Faith Mission (Faith City Mission). He did not die a wealthy man, but those who knew him believed he passed away as a successful man. Success for one person is different for another. At the time of George’s death, he was employed and had saved enough money for himself to have a proper funeral and not be buried in a pauper’s grave. George’s story mattered to the staff and volunteers of Wichita Falls Faith Mission and continues to matter. It reminds us there is hope for the hopeless, and there is still work to be done to help more people experience their own success.

Proud to be sober and working, George Chambers poses in front of the mission’s original location in 1962.
In the spring of 1968, the Mission purchased the old Lamar Baptist Church building (known at the time as Downtown Baptist). This building was located at Fourth and Lamar Streets and would be the Mission’s home for the next twenty years. In the spring of 1974, ministry to children began with a family community center being established. In August of that year, Sharen and Gordon “Pete” Smith came to work with Jim Cook, and in January of 1975, the Smiths assumed full operation.

Pete later shared, “When Jim (Cook) left, I called Dick Hogan, my boss, and asked what I should do. He said, ‘Run the Mission, Honey.’ He called me ‘Honey.’” That year the Mission began serving meals on wheels and Thanksgiving dinner to senior citizens. In 1976, the building underwent significant remodelling with a chapel added downstairs and a community room upstairs. In 1977, a women’s dormitory was created on the 3rd floor.
Lisa received new teeth because of generous donations. Bad teeth often cause low self-esteem and are one of the primary reasons that women are not hired for various jobs.

Your donation helps women feel and know they are valued.

Lisa became involved with drugs two weeks after she turned 18. Eventually, she overcame the drugs and alcohol and became clean and sober for 13 years. Unfortunately, Lisa fell back into addiction, which would subsequently damage her relationship with her daughter and strip her of a business she owned, her house, and vehicle. Lisa walked down the hallway of the county jail and brokenly cried out to God, “If you will move this mountain, I will not go anywhere without taking Jesus.” God answered her prayers by softening the district attorney’s heart and reducing her sentence to one year in state prison.

Lisa came to Faith Refuge needing healing from the lie of, “I’m not good enough.” This lie is believed by many of the women who enter our homeless shelter. Praise be to the LORD, Lisa no longer believes this lie and has now graduated from the New Beginnings Drug and Alcohol Recovery Program knowing, “God gave me favor.”
“It’s hard to believe in something you cannot see,” Randi matter-of-factly said. She did not mean believing in God, rather she could not imagine herself being successful.
In 1981, Faith City Mission became a free-standing agency with no formal ties with its parent organization in Amarillo. The organization became known as Wichita Falls Faith Mission, Inc., and the Smiths were named executive directors.

Victories in the lives of the homeless and hurting occurred often. However, the structure where the ministry housed itself was already decades old and had been designed as a church, not a homeless shelter. Its wooden interior increased the hazard of fire, and the roof frequently needed repairs. By the mid-1980s the mission leaders and construction experts became convinced problems with the old church building on Lamar could not be overcome. Finally, it became impossible to insure the building.

The board of directors made a public appeal for funds to build a new mission structure at 1300 Travis Street. “In retrospect,” shared Pete Smith, “the old mission on Lamar served God in uncountable ways. Young ministers grew in the Lord as they found a pulpit for their first sermons. Children attending Vacation Bible School there were introduced to the Lord. Some of them are adults now with ministries of their own. Cooking classes, children’s playground, Family Days, bi-lingual services, and jobs at the Spot Labor Post are just a few of the blessings which flowed through that old building. Even to its last moments on its last day, the old house of God sheltered the homeless, fed the hungry, and provided clothing for the needy.”

Randi and her two boys spent months at Faith Refuge learning how they do have value and worth. This little family found hope and a new beginning at a homeless shelter. Randi still visits Faith Refuge’s family case manager when anxiety overwhelms her but quickly remembers that faith in God and herself will see her through the toughest times in life. Randi is working, has a place to call home, a vehicle, and the wisdom to take one day at a time.
Fire destroyed the old mission about eight weeks before the new building was completed. By the grace of God, no one was injured in the fire, even though the basement was filled with family clients when the blaze was discovered.

The citizens of the Wichita Falls area responded generously with donations, making it possible to move into the new facility debt-free in the spring of 1988. Acceptance of guests at our downtown location began on May 23, 1988. With more space and increasing donations, the ministry was able to provide a new addiction program called Overcomers Recovery Program. The mission started combating homelessness by offering this recovery program.

Your donation brings victory to veterans struggling with addiction.
In 1987, through peer pressure from an older soldier and wanting the experience, Keith bought his first crack cocaine. This soon led to drug addiction and alcoholism. Keith kept up with his military duties, but inwardly he was deteriorating. He started selling his personal belongings and the property of others to support his habit. By God’s grace, Keith never failed a drug test while in the military, so he received an honorable discharge in 1990.

Following his military career, Keith moved back to his home city of Fort Worth and obtained employment. He worked for several good companies, but his alcoholism and drug addiction always led to his dismissal. He completed many recovery programs, but he continually fell back into the same destructive patterns. Keith expressed what he believed the key thing missing from those recovery programs — “the God experience.”

In March 2017, Keith visited Faith Mission and spoke with the intake director, Pete Corrales. Pete gave Keith a tour of the facility and then showed him the chapel. Pete, a former drug addict and alcoholic, shared his story with Keith and showed him exactly where he sat in the chapel when he gave his life to Christ. Pete did not know until months later about Keith surrendering his life and will to Christ in that same spot in the chapel.

Keith graduated from the New Beginnings Alcohol and Drug Recovery program, which was formerly known as Overcomers Recovery Program. When asked why he wanted to continue his journey in the job readiness program at Faith Mission, Keith said, “To see what great things God will do for me.”

KEITH’S STORY
Sharen and Pete Smith faithfully served at Wichita Falls Faith Mission together for 32 years. In November 2006, Sharen lost her long and brave battle with cancer. During this decade, God was preparing one visionary for the homeless to retire, while, unknown to the mission’s staff, God was raising another visionary to make new paths for reaching homeless women and children.

Years went by with Wichita Falls Faith Mission operating its homeless shelter primarily for men at 1300 Travis Street. Then in 2007 “Mr. Pete” retired, and God began tugging at a lady’s heart for homeless women. Her name was Johnelle Donnell, and she started a quest to help more homeless women in Wichita Falls. At the same time, leaders at Wichita Falls Faith Mission began to pray for a way to help the growing population of homeless women and children. What was to come in the Sixth Decade of the mission could only be accomplished by God through His obedient servants.
The 9/11 attack prompted Chris to join the military. By the end of his eight years of service, he was drinking two bottles of whiskey a day to numb the pain. Rededicating his life to the Lord helped him overcome his alcoholism after he left the Army. Chris remained faithful to the Lord for a while, but sin crept back into his life, which opened the door to alcohol and drugs.

“I remember sitting in my truck one night and crying. I had lost everything, including my dignity. Worst of all, I didn’t hear God speaking to my heart like He used to,” shared Chris. God allowed Chris to feel the void of His presence so he might hit rock bottom. Chris joined the New Beginnings Drug and Alcohol Recovery Program at Faith Mission. His leadership abilities became apparent to the staff at the mission and the resale store. Chris said, “I heard God tell me I needed to step it up and be a leader to the other programmers.” Chris graduated from the program with flying colors while encouraging others to remain clean and sober.
Because YOU gave, women and children now have a safe place to stay in Wichita Falls.

Faith Refuge Capital Campaign Committee, aka “The Nine.”

FRONT ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT:
Johnelle Donnell, Carol Wagner, Jennifer Estes, Paula Elmore

BACK ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT:
Mac Lovelace, Lynn Moran, Vern Huffines, Janice Stine, Bob Thompson

Steve Sparks, CEO, speaking words of thanks and blessing at Faith Refuge's opening day.
During the last ten years of Wichita Falls Faith Mission’s history, there have been significant developments. Faith Mission’s Thrift Shoppe opened in 2008 on Harrison. It is now called Faith Resale and Donation Center and is located at 4502 Old Jacksboro Highway. The new location was purchased in December 2017.

The most important story of this decade, however, is the birth of Faith Refuge. A group of nine eager volunteers, composed of people who simply heard the stories of abandonment, abuse, and addiction among the homeless women of our area, became impassioned to do something for these women. After much searching for a location for a shelter for women and children “The Nine” pursued an opportunity to purchase what was formerly a Baptist chapel and daycare on East Hatton Road. The group raised over $400,000.00 within ten days to buy the building that is now Faith Refuge.

Following the purchase of the building, “The Nine” oversaw the project and ran the capital campaign. Though the task was challenging, each member was overwhelmed with gratitude for each other, every volunteer, and the people who supported their dream of a refuge for women in need. Above all, they were grateful to God for all He did as His hand of love was so obvious in this project. On May 3, 2012, Faith Refuge for women and children opened its doors.
As we fondly remember the last 60 years, we are keenly aware that there is still work to do. Wichita Falls Faith Mission, Inc. is committed to serving our homeless neighbors for as long as it takes to eliminate homelessness. In the next 60 years, the way we approach our programs and services may change, but our mission will never change.

To provide Christ centered programs and services that lead the homeless toward self-sufficiency.

Steve Sparks, CEO
2012 to Present
In the Old Testament, God commanded that when the farmers harvested their crops, they were to leave the edges of their fields unharvested so the poor could provide for themselves by “gleaning” from what was left (Leviticus 23:22). This reflects the tender mercy of God on those who have little or nothing. It was also a way for the poor to work and provide for themselves without having to beg for life-giving sustenance, thereby preserving their dignity.

We strive to emulate this Old Testament model. We want to give help with a future. We want to meet our homeless neighbors where they are and love them enough to let them and help them expect more. We believe God has a plan for every person. It starts with a loving and trusting relationship with Him. Our journey with God is filled with personal growth, obedience to His will, accountability, hard work, and follow-through.

By working in concert with concerned individuals, pastors and churches, law enforcement, other non-profits, and social service agencies, we can provide Christ-centered programs and services that lead the homeless toward self-sufficiency. God has equipped us with a team of highly talented and compassionate men and women. They prayerfully guide each individual toward new opportunities while providing accountability and encouragement. We have also been blessed with thousands of volunteers giving their time and talents, prayer warriors lifting us up to our Heavenly Father, and contributors who faithfully support us financially so that we can offer all our services free of charge.

Why are we faith based? At the core of everything we do is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We believe that with the transforming power of Christ’s presence in their lives along with His guidance found in the Bible, our clients can truly find value and purpose. His grace and forgiveness break the chains of our past and free us to live a changed life. His never-failing love helps us make sense in a world turned upside-down. Why wouldn’t we share that with those who walk through our doors? Sharing the Gospel is what we believe we were commanded to do.

This same love drives us to care and meet their felt needs. We recognize their value and dignity bestowed on them by God. We believe change is possible, but sometimes a person just needs a meal and a safe bed first. We hold to the virtue of personal responsibility while recognizing that some need help carrying their burden for a while.

If we have learned anything from the last 60 years here at Wichita Falls Faith Mission Inc., it would be that every person has a story, and every story matters to God. And because they matter to God, they should matter to us. How do we show someone that they matter? Listen to their stories and then empower them to write new chapters for their lives, chapters of victory, hope, and success.

For us, this is the true bottom line.

In HIS Service,

Steve Sparks, CEO
HELP US CONTINUE TO REWRITE STORIES OF HOMELESSNESS

60 YEAR CELEBRATION!
Yes, Steve, I’ll provide financial support so Wichita Falls Faith Mission, Inc. can provide hope, meals, shelter and care to the homeless for the next 60 years.

☑ $26.40 to feed & care for 15 people for one meal
☑ $47.64 to provide 6 nights of shelter for a child, woman, or man
☑ $70.40 to feed & care for 40 people for one meal
☑ $103.22 to provide 13 nights of shelter for a child, woman, or man
☑ $___________ to help as much as possible.
☑ Make my gift monthly!

Donate online now! faithmissionwf.org