

Together...

with faith, hope, love & spirit

...we can get the job done

Faith. Hope. Love. Spirit. You see it on the faces of the hungry who've stopped in to the Community Kitchen for a hot lunch on a raw Alabama winter day; in the excited eyes of school children participating in the latest science experiment at Urban Kidz; in the grateful hearts of homeowners whose residences now glow with a fresh coat of paint thanks to the Joe Rush Program.

Urban Ministry's vision of the future – through the expansion of current programs and the institution of new ones -- is to grow in ministry to the community by putting faith into action.

[graphic here – the foundation of a building with “faith” written on it]

Faith (fāth) *n.* A confident belief in the truth, value or trustworthiness of a person, idea or thing

Faith. It's the underpinning of humanity and the bricks and mortar of Urban Ministry and the United Methodist Church. And faith exists in many aspects of life: from religion and spirit to generosity of heart to belief in the tenets of love, healing and the relief of suffering.

Because in poverty, people are starving; their bodies ache; their hearts yearn; their souls cry out.

Together, we can feed them.

About the United Methodist Church

John Wesley, 18th century minister and founder of the Methodist Church, preached:

"In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity."

This is the basis for everything the Church does. The responsibility to nurture, sponsor and enrich the community -- encouraging the greatest personal development in everyone -- is a weighty one. No one individual alone can minister to everyone in need.

For that, you need a team of dedicated servants to carry out the mission.

Methodist teachings follow, among others, two Christian ministries:

- Servant Ministry -- Faithful in service to God and others; and
- Servant Leadership -- John Wesley's "watching over one another in love."

The Church strongly supports social climates that hold people in high esteem, foster communities, and where individuals have the chance to grow strong physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Reaching out to those in need in our communities...being good stewards of the faith, hope, love, and spirit they entrust to us...is what leadership is all about.

Urban Ministry – The First 30 Years

Urban Ministry's Mission:

**Bring compassion and wholeness
to the urban poor of Birmingham, Alabama.**

Compassion (kəm-păsh'ən) *n.* – Harmony; support; affinity

Wholeness (hōl'nīs) *n.* – Completeness; a single unit

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Founded in 1976, Urban Ministry is an inner-city mission of the United Methodist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Under the direction of Tom Duley, Urban Ministry performs its work in one of the most economically distressed urban areas in the country.

Statewide unemployment in Alabama is 15%. Unemployment in Urban Ministry's West End community is **more than three times** that number -- **47%**. Nearly half of the West End's residents are out of work.

And unemployment is the loss leader in poverty.

No one dreams of living in poverty...with little or no schooling and no ability to support themselves or their families. Living paycheck to paycheck with all the bills paid on time would be like winning the lottery for these folks.

[graphic here – the same “faith foundation” only this time “love” is the first floor]

Love (lŭv) n. The benevolence, kindness or brotherhood that man should rightfully feel toward others

Urban Ministry is there -- serving the needs of the poor -- through its programs and facilities. Programs like:

- **Assistance Ministries** – Director Phoebe Redwine sees that food is provided and help is given with monthly expenses like rent, utilities and other needs:
 - **Community Kitchen** -- Belle Carlisle and her helpers served 16,712 lunches in 2004 to the disabled, seniors on a fixed income, and children out of school. The Community Kitchen program helps low and very low income citizens stretch their dollars just a bit further...by providing a nutritious mid-day meal. Volunteers leave jobs, homes, and schools to help Belle get meals served. In 2004, 162 volunteers donated 1,182 hours of service and in its 25+ year history, no one has left hungry.
 - **Food Pantry** – The Pantry distributes a five to seven day supply of nonperishable food in food boxes.
 - **Financial Assistance** -- Although there are far more requests than can be filled, United Ministry does its best to give financial assistance for monthly essentials like rent, electric, water and other housing necessities. This program helps keep people in their homes instead of on the streets.

Families and seniors also receive support during the holidays.

- **Joe Rush Program** – This work camp program provides exterior house painting for low income, elderly, and disabled homeowners. Many of the workers are out-of-town church and community groups and Urban Ministry houses and feeds groups of up to 55 people per week.
- **Urban Kidz** – This children's program consists of two units: an after-school care program and a summer day camp program. Focusing on children in fourth through eighth grades...a critical time in a child's development...this program helps kids academically, emotionally, and spiritually. High school and college-age student volunteers offer assistance with literacy, homework, and lead programs.

Shortly, Urban Kidz will need to move from the Cotton Avenue building to a different location. This is due to the implementation of a new program for just-released male prisoners called Freedom House.

With Augusta Stephens at the helm, learning activities focus on reading, science, and the arts. Also offered are cultural and art awareness programs in conjunction with the Birmingham Children's Theater.

In the fall of 2004, students participated in an eight-week creative drama workshop, which included topics on storytelling, puppetry, dramatic interpretation, and creative writing.

And Urban Ministry, in partnership with the McWane Center's Outreach program, provides hands-on science activities and presentations for children and teens in grades K-12. Students can participate in this program monthly during the school year and once a week over the course of a month in the summer.

- **Volunteer Program** – Director Mike Harper sees that volunteers enhance their discipleship and practice faith in action. In 2004, 1,437 volunteers donated 10,400 hours valued at \$176,904.
- **Kairos Prison Ministry** – This ministry conducts weekly visits for teaching and counseling at Donaldson Correctional Facility in addition to two Kairos weekends each year at Urban Ministry. Recently, 84 inmates participated in these weekends – the goal being “listen listen love love” – to help change their lives for the better. After completing one weekend, a man said, “**If the world was this full of love, there wouldn't be any need for this prison.**”
- **Community Education** -- In partnership with the Arlington/West End Neighborhood Association, 15 to 20 people each year learn basic computer and Internet skills so they can keep up in today's information revolution and compete effectively for jobs.

[graphic here – faith foundation, love first floor, and now spirit second floor]

Spirit (spīr'īt) *n.* That which is traditionally believed to be the vital principle or animating force within a living being; strong loyalty or dedication; to impart courage or determination

Having diverse and wide-ranging programs is great. Urban Ministry loves reaching out and helping as many citizens as possible. But running programs and facilities takes money. Urban Ministry needs funding to expand the donor pool, strengthen current programs, and initiate new ones to reach out to more in need.

For instance, future planning includes three new spirit-filled programs -- outlined in detail in **Campaign for Urban Compassion** -- that could use your help:

- **Freedom House** -- A facility for just-released male inmates that gives them a bridge of hope and faith between prison and their new lives
- **Academy for Action Formation** -- This program will provide greater opportunities for volunteers to put their faith into action in hometowns all across the country
- **Business Initiator** -- Assisting low income women with the funds needed to begin their own businesses

The Campaign for Urban Compassion

Organization...both in administration and preparedness...is at the heart of every endeavor that includes multiple facilities, many faceted programs, and loads of volunteers. And organization is the touchstone of Urban Ministry.

Organization requires up-to-date facilities and directors that enhance and enrich its programs. After almost 30 years of serving the West End's urban poor financially, socially, physically and spiritually, Urban Ministry's facilities and organizational capacity require upgrading and expansion to meet an ever-increasing need.

We're calling on community leaders to be good stewards of Urban Ministry's vision -- funds raised will renovate tired and outdated buildings and equipment at the Cotton Avenue and Walnut Grove locations, implement new programs, and expand existing ones.

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Urban Ministry is **love in action for brothers and sisters**. It could be you, your brother-in-law, or your mother who may next be in need of assistance.

Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes leaders and volunteers full of hope to raise a community.

[graphic here – faith foundation, love first floor, spirit second floor and now hope is the roof over it all]

Hope (hōp) *n.* To look forward with confidence of fulfillment; expect with desire; a ground for expectation or trust

Urban Ministry serves inner-city residents at two West End locations, Cotton Avenue and Walnut Grove. Both buildings, worn after years of continuous love and use, are in need of renovation and upgrade.

Cotton Avenue

The Cotton Avenue facility, a 50-year-old building, is home to Urban Ministry's headquarters, needs rejuvenation, and houses the following programs: Assistance Ministries (Community Kitchen, Emergency Care, and Food Pantry) and Urban Kidz. Urban Kidz will move to a nearby facility once Freedom House opens.

The future includes two exciting new programs for the Cotton Avenue building:

Freedom House

What would you do if you found yourself hundreds of miles away from home with only \$10 and a bus ticket... to a town you didn't live in?

That's the reality for many male inmates newly released from Alabama state prisons and that's what Urban Ministry is trying to remedy with Freedom House. This program will act as a bridge between prison and the outside world that will nurture, train, and assist men in building new lives. A safe and affordable place to live will enable these men to make the transition back into society.

Locating Freedom House on the second floor of the Cotton Avenue building will require major renovations and staffing.

Business Initiator

This great new program is designed for women to jumpstart their own businesses. Many women feel trapped in a cycle of poverty -- no job, underemployed, or wages so low they can't possibly get ahead.

Urban Ministry will be a resource to help women interested in starting and running their own businesses in two critical ways:

- Community volunteers will serve as mentors to lend their skills and insights so that program participants will have the best chances of success.
- Small incentive loans will help launch the next great business idea. Loans of up to \$5,000 will be available to qualified participants.

In order to make it soar, Urban Ministry will need a full-time director with past business and financial experience to lead and service this program.

Walnut Grove

Urban Ministry would like to continue using the Walnut Grove location for programs and activities. Plans are under way for the owners of the Walnut Grove building to either transfer title to Urban Ministry or provide a long-term lease arrangement.

There are two programs planned for Walnut Grove: Joe Rush and Academy for Action Formation.

Joe Rush Program

Under the leadership of John Brown, the Joe Rush program offers opportunities for groups to experience inner-city ministry by painting the exteriors of homes owned by low income, elderly or disabled residents. The average age of a homeowner is 64 with an average monthly income of \$1,047.

Scraping, priming, and painting are on the list for twenty-three work teams covering 11 Saturdays in the spring and summer of 2005 for. Groups from junior high school age and up can stay for a week -- the Joe Rush Center for Urban Mission offers dormitory facilities and meals.

The Joe Rush Program's statistics are impressive: since 2000, 109 homes painted and 109 homeowners given the gift of pride in their surroundings. However,

there are at least 10,000 substandard housing units in Birmingham – that's 10,000 residents in need of help.

Thousands of volunteers have given of themselves through this program -- and received the gift of heartfelt thanks and appreciation in return.

Who was Joe Rush? This vital program, named after the Rev. Joe Rush, exists in the spirit of selfless giving. Joe's longtime support made him key player in the early days of Urban Ministry. He set an example for everyone to follow by serving others in word and deed through his tireless efforts to improve others' lives.

Academy for Action Formation

Launching in September 2005, this program's heartbeat is the translation of faith into action for a steadily increasing proactive volunteer base. The goal for this program is service and servanthood.

The Academy will be an ongoing experience-based educational opportunity teaching participants to be proactive volunteers in their own communities and beyond. The first class of 2005-2006 will participate in five intensive weekends covering the following:

- **Orientation Weekend** -- On this first weekend, a home will be painted through the Joe Rush program, a tour of Birmingham's Mission/Outreach programs will be undertaken, and a time of reflection will be spent with a local community leader
- **Poverty Weekend** -- A street fair and cookout for urban children will be held, the group will attend a seminar on children and families living in poverty, and each participant will be matched with a child, family, or older adult living in poverty
- **Homelessness Weekend** -- This third weekend will be spent visiting a local homeless shelter, each participant will be matched with a homeless person for faith and fellowship, and Sunday service will be held at Church of the Reconciler, a church where many homeless worship
- **Housing Weekend** -- Program participants will work with staff from Habitat for Humanity, attend a seminar on urban housing patterns, and tour Birmingham's poverty housing

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- **Future Plans Weekend** -- The theme of this final weekend in the Academy for Action Formation program will highlight how participants can use the skills they've learned in their own hometowns, discuss options for ministry, and develop his or her own "take home" project

Urban Ministry – The Road Ahead

[graphic here – entire building wrapped in red bow of purpose]

Purpose (Pûr'pəs) *n.* The object toward which one strives or for which something exists; goal; aim; determination; resolution.

Purpose is a powerful tool. It guides you, draws you in, and keeps your eye on the goal. Purpose gives vision microscopic focus. Fill your heart with purpose, search every day for ways to make others' lives better, and you will always be in the right place at the right time.

The guiding purpose, the pinpointed focus at Urban Ministry is to continue serving the needs of the urban poor in Birmingham's West End. To give them hope, restore their faith, provide them with purpose. And plans for building renovations, for continuing existing programs, and instituting new ones will do that.

However, Urban Ministry needs leaders and volunteers to walk with us into the future, leaders who share our vision and our focus.

If faith is the sure foundation, then love is the first floor, spirit is the second, and hope is the roof overhead. Please help Urban Ministry in its Campaign for Urban Compassion – it's a powerful amount of hope and faith for those who so desperately need it.

Let your love for one another be constant