



Offering financial opportunity to homeless and economically disadvantaged individuals.  
**STREETzine** is a program of The Stewpot and a member of **International Network of Street Papers**

SUGGESTED DONATION TO A VENDOR WITH A BADGE: \$1.00 OR MORE - LA DONACIÓN SUGERIDA A UN VENDEDOR CON INSIGNIA: \$1.00 OR MORE

## Food Insecurities Around the Holidays

By Wendy Rojo

When I think of the holidays, I think of food. Food brings people together and allows us to communicate in ways that did not seem possible.

I grew up in a Mexican American household, and a large part of my heritage is food. My mom would say, “de un plato comen dos,” which roughly translates to “from one plate, two can eat.”

***My mom believes that if everyone shared a small amount of what they had, no one would ever go hungry. Unfortunately, around the holidays, it is quite apparent that there is a need for food in our communities.***

My mom believes that if everyone shared a small amount of what they had, no one would ever go hungry. Unfortunately, around the holidays, it is quite apparent that there is a need for food in our communities. Food insecurity has increased significantly due to the rising prices of groceries. According to United Way Dallas, food prices increased by 11.6% since the summer of 2021.

The increase in prices and the expectation of gift-giving around the holiday season can put a strain on families. In fact, the Texas Tribune reports that the North Texas Food Bank (NTFB) and its partners of roughly 400 food banks provide about 12.4 million meals a month.

The North Texas Food Bank recently started The Face of Hunger campaign to support families facing food insecurity during the holiday season. According to the NTFB, about 700,000 North Texans

are affected by food insecurity. The organization states that the number of meals provided increased by 17% since March.

Similarly, the number of families served during the food distribution at The Stewpot has increased over the past couple of months. When I first joined the food distribution team here at The Stewpot, we served about 120 families during each drive-thru. At our last distribution, on November 19th, we served 195 families. The number of new families needing groceries is steadily increasing, and many of the families I speak with attribute their need to grocery prices.

***For many, it is a choice between buying groceries or purchasing other necessities.***

The Dallas Morning News recently reported that the rising housing prices and inflation affect many individuals and non-profits. The families attribute their need to the gift-giving season. For many, it is a choice between buying groceries or purchasing other necessities.



***Volunteers prepping orders for The Stewpot's food distribution. Photo courtesy of Wendy Rojo.***



***Artwork by Stewpot Artist Darrell Plunkett.***

Of course, a large part of the holiday season is about giving gifts. For example, Family Gateway serves roughly 230 families during the holiday season, and they expect to help 575 kids through their holiday store. Similarly, Youth World is holding its annual Target shopping event and Christmas toy giveaway.

***If we all give a little during the giving season, then we can all spread a little more cheer.***

These are just some of the organizations around the Dallas-Fort Worth area that are helping during what can be the toughest season for some. If we all give a little during the giving season, then we can all spread a little more cheer.

***Wendy Rojo is managing editor of STREETzine.***

# STREETZine

**STREETZine** is a program of  
The Stewpot.



The **STREETZine** is a monthly newspaper published by The Stewpot, a ministry of the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas. The Stewpot provides services and resources for people experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of being homeless. The organization also offers opportunities for a new life.

As part of this ministry, the **STREETZine** seeks to raise awareness about the issues surrounding homelessness and poverty. The monthly publication also offers financial opportunity for Stewpot clients who sell the paper to Dallas residents. Vendors are able to move towards economic self-sufficiency by using the money they receive from selling copies to purchase bus passes, food, and necessary living expenses. Clients also receive stipends for contributing articles to **STREETZine**.

The content in **STREETZine** does not necessarily reflect the views or endorsement of its publisher, editors, contributors, sponsors or advertisers. To learn more about this publication, contact Betty Heckman, Director of Enrichment, 1835 Young Street, Dallas, Texas 75201 or [BettyH@thestewpot.org](mailto:BettyH@thestewpot.org). To read more about **STREETZine**, a member of the International Network of Street Papers, go to [www.thestewpot.org/streetzine](http://www.thestewpot.org/streetzine).

**STREETZine** is published by The Stewpot of First Presbyterian Church.

**Managing Editor:** Wendy Rojo

**Editorial Advisory Board:**

The Rev. Amos Disasa  
Brenda Snitzer  
Suzanne Erickson  
David Moore  
Poppy Sundeen  
Sarah Disasa  
William McKenzie  
Betty Heckman

[streetzine@thestewpot.org](mailto:streetzine@thestewpot.org)

## The Pastor's Letter: Before the Gift of Hope

By The Reverend Meagan Findeiss

*Editor's Note: This essay is excerpted from a sermon that Reverend Findeiss preached on Dec. 3, 2017 at Clayton Presbyterian Church, in Clayton, Indiana.*

There is a kids' show that teaches through song, and one episode has the words, "when you wait, you can play, sing or imagine anything."

This mantra is fabulous advice for youngsters and adults as well. Doing something always helps with the waiting. Whether in line at the DMV, sitting in the waiting room for the doctor, or waiting for the bus, if you find something to distract you from the waiting, time can move at a quicker speed. There is much truth in the age old saying, "a watched pot never boils."

In the first Letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul reminds the church in Corinth that it is in our waiting that we have been equipped with the gifts of God. In this season of Advent, of waiting for the coming of the Christ child, we have to wait.

*Some say the gifts Paul speaks of in his letter to the Corinthians are the gifts of: prophecy, teaching, wisdom, speech, healing, and so on. I think one of the gifts is also the gift of hope.*

As we wait, we can remember that God has given us beyond that which we require. Some say the gifts Paul speaks of in his letter to the Corinthians are the gifts of: prophecy, teaching, wisdom, speech, healing, and so on. I think one of the gifts is also the gift of hope.

Years ago, I worked in an inpatient adolescent behavioral health unit. Each week, I co-taught an hour-long class that centered on life lessons and encouraged conversation around growing edges everyone encounters. The young people in these classes ranged in age from 9 to 18 and all had wrestled and suffered with serious

mental health issues.

In our weekly gatherings we focused on topics that were important for each person's spiritual journey. In one of our classes we talked about hope, which was a particularly tricky subject matter because of its abstract nature. For this one lesson on hope, the decision was made to print out quotes for the patients to see. Some of the quotes read:

"H.O.P.E. Hold On Pain Ends." "Pain is real. But so is hope."

"Hope is not pretending that troubles don't exist. It is the hope that they won't last forever. That hurts will be healed and difficulties overcome."

For these participants, you could see that they had a connection with these quotes. You could see a glimpse of clarity come across their face as they shared which quote was meaningful to them, and why they chose it.

When the class ended the young participants took the quotes back to their room and hung them up on their walls, the quotes serving as a tangible reminder of hope; a hope that they would be able to work through their issues and come out on the other side. That the pain they were enduring would one day come to an end.

In our present circumstances, where there is an abundance of incomprehensible pain and unexplainable tragedy, it feels beyond difficult to find hope in certain circumstances. We all need tangible reminders like the young people.

Paul gives us a tangible reminder in the letter to the Corinthians that we all have fellowship with God through Jesus. We all have an intimacy with God that urges us to respond each day with the use of our gifts.

In times of waiting, we can be hopeful for what is to come. We can choose to imagine a place where our work contributes to the furthering of the Kingdom of God. We can use our gifts to produce a healing and powerful love that acts as a balm for this hurting

**Continued on page 5**

# Executive Director's Report

By Brenda Snitzer

The holidays are an interesting time of the year. For many people, they provide a season of family and joy, as well as of wonderful memorable occasions. For some, it brings sadness, either because of painful events or losses from the past or because of being alone during the holidays.

For me, most of the season is joyful. But I also experienced the passing of my father in December many, many years ago. So I experience some of that sadness during this time of the year.

My family has many traditions but one that has always been special is going to worship together on Christmas Eve and then having a wonderful dinner at my mother's house. Even though my sister's family and my own live within 10 minutes of my mother, we always spent the night with our children at her house, waking up there on Christmas morning. Now that our children are grown, getting married, and starting their own families, we have a little more trouble with everyone spending the night. Still, many of us do.

Stewpot clients like to share stories and memories about their own past

family traditions, from when they were growing up or raising their families. Many try to continue some of those traditions by attending the worship of their faith. Many also enjoy taking part in special Thanksgiving or Christmas meals at The Stewpot, The Bridge, or at other providers' locations.

***Stewpot clients like to share stories and memories about their own past family traditions, from when they were growing up or raising their families. Many try to continue some of those traditions by attending the worship of their faith.***

Some of our clients participate in the Dallas Street Choir, which has an annual tradition of serving lunch on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. Norma's restaurant provides the food while volunteers help serve the meal. This year was no exception. They sang Christmas songs and enjoyed each other's fellowship.

Like others, The Stewpot also tries to offer special presents at this time of year. We provide items like new coats that will help folks experiencing homelessness. We also give special items to just bring joy.

Of course, the holidays can be a time of sadness for our clients, just as they can be for others around the community. Grief is more pronounced and separation from family can make

folks feel even more alone than usual.

***Of course, the holidays can be a time of sadness for our clients, just as they can be for others around the community. Grief is more pronounced and separation from family can make folks feel even more alone than usual.***

The Stewpot and other organizations like The Bridge try to lessen the sadness through special meals and celebrations. The Stewpot's Second Chance Cafe at The Bridge plays Christmas music and we do special give-away days at The Bridge and The Stewpot to lighten our guests' load.

Individuals that want to help folks experiencing homelessness can donate funds or call us at 214-746-2785 to find out what is most needed for special give-away days. That could be coats, hats, gloves or other items that an organization might want to help folks with at this time of year. Or it might be a gift card to a sandwich shop or some other other speciality item. The other thing is to find out how individuals and companies can help year-round!

***Brenda Snitzer is the executive director of The Stewpot.***



***Artwork by Stewpot Artist Teresa Zacarias.***

# A Tale of Five Christmases

By Poppy Sundeen

## Christmas, 1990

Ten-year-old Jennifer Moore was accustomed to shifting circumstances. Her family situation had never been stable, and that Christmas she was temporarily living with relatives. “They were concerned about how they would get gifts for everyone in the house,” she recalls. “I remember that one of the churches came by and the people loaded the place up with presents. As a kid, I thought that was just the greatest thing for Christmas.”

By her teens, Jennifer no longer believed that Santa went down the chimney with his giftbag but held onto aspects of the tradition. “It’s the spirit of Christmas - St. Nick and the whole idea of giving.”

## Christmas in the Windy City

In her late teens, Jennifer left California, where she was living at the time, and headed east to Chicago. “It was my first big city.” Working as a waitress didn’t provide the steady income needed to pay for housing, and eventually she landed on the streets.

Five years after her move, Jennifer was homeless and feeling the impact of winter in Chicago. “It was bad timing, because the snow was beginning to fall, and the shelters were packed.” As the holidays approached, a family member came to get her and brought her to West Texas to live.

## Christmas at The Bridge

Jennifer bounced from West Texas to Reno to Austin and finally to Dallas, experiencing homelessness at various points along the way. In Dallas, she sought shelter at The Bridge Homeless Recovery Center and spent the holidays there two years in a row.

“People cope with the holidays in a different way when they’re in a shelter as opposed to being with friends and family, so it always seemed kind of tense.” The mood was lifted by the

shelter’s holiday events and with little gifts from The Bridge and The Stewpot.

“For people in the homeless community who have broken relationships or lack of friends,” she explains, “it takes time to move through and transition from that point in your life to rebuild those bonds and make new friends so you can have more of what people consider a tradition holiday.”

While living at The Bridge, Jennifer learned about The Bridge’s subsidized housing program. She put in her application. It was approved, and she was on her way home at last.

## Christmas in a home of her own

Four years ago, Jennifer spent the first Christmas in her own North Dallas apartment. She may have been alone, but in the comfort of her home, she didn’t mind the solitude. “It’s not as exciting as when you have all the people and presents and food around, but I try to do something for myself when I’m by myself.”

One of the things she loves to do — at Christmastime and year-round — is to work on her art. She’s been active in The Stewpot Art Program since her days at The Bridge. “From my apartment, it takes an hour to get downtown on public transportation,” she explains, but she considers it well worth the trip for a chance to paint with acrylics and create her unique jewelry items.

## Christmas present

In Jennifer’s apartment there are no garlands, no tinsel, no tree strung with lights. “When I was younger, I liked to decorate, but I need to save my money for household expenses.” But while the look may be lowkey, the spirit of the season is alive and well.



**Jennifer Moore**

“The holidays are a magical time. The colors. The creativity. It’s vibrant.”

She considers giving to be the essence of the holidays. “It’s giving, but not material things. It’s about giving of your time—enjoying the time that’s there and realizing that it’s not always going to be that way. People pass on and people move on. When you have a group of friends or family, it’s important to focus on that and give them the gift of your time and attention. You won’t remember a scarf that you got, but you’ll remember that conversation or that person who came into your life.”

This year, Jennifer’s in good company — sharing pizza, a movie and the gift of time with a relative who lives in the area

**Poppy Sundeen, a Dallas writer, is a member of the STREETzine editorial board.**

## Ten things to know about people experiencing homelessness during the holidays

*The holiday season that runs from Thanksgiving thru New Year's Day brings both joy and sadness to people around the world. Those experiencing homelessness are no different. For some, it will be a time to celebrate with friends, families, or even strangers. For others, it will bring bittersweet memories of what once was but is no longer. Organizations across Dallas, as well as around the country, understand these realities and step forward to supply food, clothing, gifts and other necessities during the holidays. Here are some ways love and kindness are shared, along with a reminder about the season's pitfalls.*

\*The Second Chance Cafe at The Bridge Homeless Recovery Center in downtown Dallas served 648 meals on Thanksgiving Day.  
Source: The Stewpot

\*The Second Chance Cafe at The Bridge expects to serve 700 meals on Christmas Eve.  
Source: The Stewpot

\*The Stewpot expects to provide 600 meals to families during the holiday season at its facility in downtown Dallas.  
Source: The Stewpot

\*Brother Bill's Helping Hand in West Dallas hosts a six-day holiday event each year to provide gifts to clients in the neighborhood that the organization has served for 78 years. It also sought to give away 1,000 turkeys during the Thanksgiving holiday.  
Source: Brother Bill's Helping Hand

\*Family Gateway expects to serve 230 families or more through its holiday program. The downtown Dallas organization also expects to assist 575 children through its Holiday Store.  
Source: Family Gateway

\*The Vogel Alcove sponsored a toy drive through early December and then hosted its annual Holiday Store in its location near downtown Dallas.  
Source: Vogel Alcove

\*Catholic Charities of Dallas will host its annual Christmas gift distribution event to families in need.  
Source: Catholic Charities of Dallas

\*The North Texas Food Bank launched The Face of Hunger campaign to support families during the holidays.  
Source: North Texas Food Bank

\*Rising housing costs and inflation are impacting nonprofits in North Texas that serve financially strapped households, including during the holiday season.  
Source: *The Dallas Morning News*

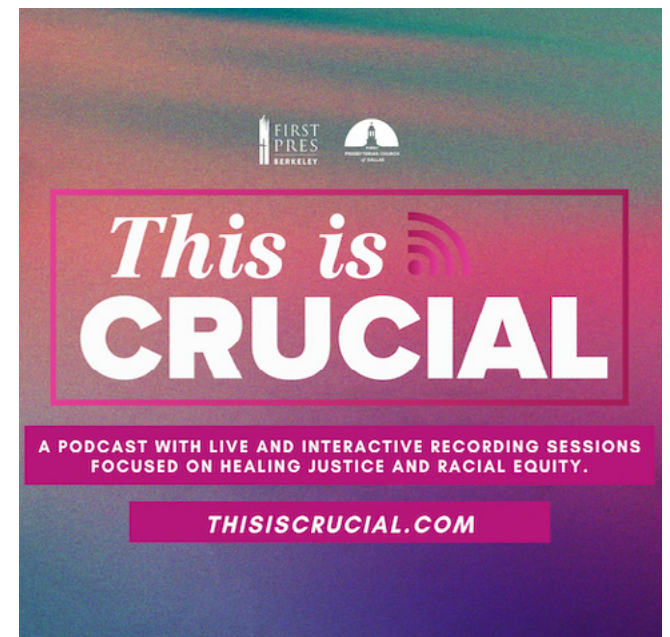
\*Loss, loneliness, and shame can serve as "powerful triggers" for some people experiencing homelessness during the holidays.  
Source: *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

## Continued from page 2

world. We can live our lives in the way of Jesus, hopeful that the waiting will be over someday soon; hopeful that the pain we are facing today, will not last forever; hopeful that difficult times will be overcome.

How do we find hope? How did the young people in the spiritual journey class find hope? It is in hopeful waiting, where we can play, sing and imagine how God will use our gifts!

***Reverend Meagan Findeiss is associate pastor for care and belonging at the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas.***



## DIAL 211

For help finding food or housing, child care, crisis counseling or substance abuse treatment.

**ANONYMOUS**  
AVAILABLE 24/7, 365 DAYS A YEAR

2-1-1 Texas helps Texas citizens connect with state and local health and human services programs.

# A Roof Over My Head for the Holidays

By Vicky Batcher

Growing up in middle class America, my family held on to old Christmas traditions: The tree, the decorations, and the soft glow of the lights. The music that just fills your heart with love and the magic of the season. There would be a glistening turkey that was always the center piece with family in every chair.

One year our neighbors' house was robbed on Christmas Eve. Our childhood friends had no presents left to open. My brother and I chose three presents each and we took them to our neighbors. In some ways, that was the best Christmas ever. It felt like it meant something more.

***One year our neighbors' house was robbed on Christmas Eve. Our childhood friends had no presents left to open. My brother and I chose three presents each and we took them to our neighbors. In some ways, that was the best Christmas ever. It felt like it meant something more.***

Traditions were important in the 1970s when I was growing up. In an ever-changing world, they were something you could always count on.

Snow on Christmas Eve was always so special. Mom would wake me up to watch it fall, like diamonds falling from the sky. Mom used to tell us that "Santa wouldn't be to our house until after we went to church."

The best part was riding home with Daddy every Christmas Day after church. Hearing his dress shoes clacking all the way up the hall to the double doors leading to the parking lot. I remember always having to gently run behind him to keep up.

When I became an adult, life wasn't so easy. Being a single parent during the holidays or any special occasion was extremely difficult. We didn't have a lot. A tree with lights was really all we had. It was something. I remember feeling guilty because oftentimes the presents under the tree for my kids was something they needed, instead of something they wanted.

Then the unthinkable happened. Homelessness. During those years I did everything I could simply to get a hotel room and maybe some food. The guilt ate at me knowing I couldn't give the kids a Christmas like I had. The holidays became something I wanted to hide from. Sitting in a car and looking out the window, watching the rain drip down the windows was how some holidays were spent. It was devastating.

***During those years I did everything I could simply to get a hotel room and maybe some food. The guilt ate at me knowing I couldn't give the kids a Christmas like I had. The holidays became something I wanted to hide from.***

## The present

Today, I live on a fixed income. I've been fortunate enough to be approved for a disability which comes with a monthly check I can depend on. It's not easy. My days are oftentimes filled with anxiety, constantly checking my banking account. Will I have enough food? Is there enough for the bills? Will there be enough food for Faith, my dog?

This Christmas will be my fourth year in affordable housing after being homeless for seven long years. During this time, I've done everything in my power to hold onto my housing. I sold the street paper in Nashville, *The Contributor*, and have tried to get paid writing gigs like this to help supplement my income. When the pandemic hit, I became more involved in advocacy, hoping my story might possibly help others who find themselves struggling on the streets.

***This Christmas will be my fourth year in affordable housing after being homeless for seven long years. During this time, I've done everything in my power to hold onto my housing.***

I stress, more than I ever have, about what I don't know. I'm making it and proud to be paying for rent again and have a place to call my own. When the kids come over, I always try to have a fridge full of food they can rifle through. It brings me joy.

## The future

We never really know how much time we have left on earth. Being homeless taught me that there are no guarantees. I still find

myself bending over to pick up that penny on the streets, but then I stop to think that someone else probably needs it more. Really, the day I learned to appreciate what I had was the day my life started to change for the better.

My advice to you is, don't forget that the conversations you have with your loved one might be your last one. Don't skip that hug or forget to tell your loved ones how much you love them.

I tell my story to whomever will listen. I crawled into affordable housing after being broken by the streets. I've been on my knees and I'm proud that today, I can stand up. My home is my own. Most importantly, I try to help others every chance I get. Every day, I do my best to make up for the guilt I've felt for raising my kids in such turbulence.

***I tell my story to whomever will listen. I crawled into affordable housing after being broken by the streets. I've been on my knees and I'm proud that today, I can stand up.***

This year I'm so happy that we will have a tree with a moderate amount of Christmas gifts. Some will be gifts that the kids need, but others will be ones I feel like they will like. It's a Christmas I'd always wanted to give them, but never could. I hope it's not our last Christmas, with what's left of my family. Regardless, we will make it a festive one. I hope you and your family can do the same.

***Vicky Batcher is a writer and housing advocate. She also sells The Contributor in Nashville, Tennessee***

***Courtesy of INSP North America / International Network of Street Papers***

# A View from Nature: Remembering Christmas

By Vicki Gies

I was born in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1952. My father was a gospel celebrity who was born in a small country town, Hayden, Alabama. My mother was born right outside Tupelo, Mississippi. When I came into the world, we lived in a three-room apartment. We didn't have a lot of money, but to my recollection, our lives were happy and we always celebrated Christmas at my grandparents' houses, first in Tupelo, and then in Hayden.

It was a big celebration in Tupelo with aunts, uncles, and cousins. Every Christmas Eve, the oldest cousin would take us "youngins" into the backyard and shoot off fireworks. During that time, Santa Claus would deliver all the presents to the front porch. And there were usually a lot of presents! At bedtime, all the kids would either sleep on pallets on the living room floor or in a bed on the covered back porch.

The next day was Christmas Day, and every adult would cook something. The older kids would slice tomatoes, pick peas and beans, and then help put foods on the table. We ate until we were overstuffed with food! That afternoon we left Tupelo and headed to Hayden. Daddy's family was smaller than my mother's, but we had just as much fun. After about two days, we would head home to Little Rock.

Christmas happened this way for the first seven years of my life. When I turned eight years old, we moved to Knoxville, Tennessee. My daddy's quartet and music company moved from Arkansas to Tennessee. We continued celebrating Christmas the same way, going to visit both sides of my family in Tupelo and Hayden.

Celebrating Christmas drastically changed over the course of my life. After my parents passed away, a number of circumstances caused me to become homeless. During that time, I had met and married my husband, Bill. We lived in a tent with our animals, and we adapted to our surroundings and made friends with a lot of the store managers in the area where we were living.

While we were experiencing homelessness, we celebrated Christmas like normal people. We even had a small Christmas tree growing near our tent, and we decorated it. Some of the managers of the stores nearby gave us some food to add to our celebration. It was unique and special. We didn't have any close relatives, like I did when I was growing up, so we just celebrated with the two of us, and we were very thankful for what we had.

This year will be different from my childhood celebrations and from my celebrations while being homeless. After four years of being homeless, we were able to co-sign a camper trailer with a friend. We pay on it every month, and we are parked at an RV park in Kaufman County. Although we don't have any family to celebrate with, we do have a place to live, our pets, a TV to watch, and most of all, each other.

On New Year's Eve we want to watch the celebrations in New York, eat ham and black-eyed peas on New Year's Day, and talk about our resolutions. And thank God that we made it to another year!

*Vicki Gies is a STREETZine vendor and frequent STREETZine contributor.*

## Key to the October Crossword: Election Day

### Across

2. Liberterian
4. November
5. Green
8. Democrat
11. Ballot
12. Canvass
13. Redistricting
14. Convention

### Down

1. President
3. New Hampshire
6. Partisan
7. Republican
9. Register
10. Donations

# Writers' Workshop Essays

*Editor's Note: Each Friday morning at 10 a.m., The Stewpot hosts a Writers' Workshop. During the sessions, participants address selected topics through prose or poetry. In this edition of STREETZine, we feature the essays of writers about the holidays.*

## The Meaning of My Colorful Holiday Season

By Larry Jackson

My holiday season starts with the change in nature. After the summer break comes the colorful show of fall. The deep red leaves of dogwood trees are surrounded by the orange, yellow and green leaves of other trees. The woods burst forth with color.

Daylight Savings Time brings with it the long brightness of night and the shortness of days. You can start to feel the change in spirit. Love, caring, and sharing are in the air. So is excitement, as Thanksgiving Day is right around the corner. This special time brings together family and friends, both old and new.

On Thanksgiving Day, the table is set with all you can eat. After the prayer is said, you eat with the songs of Thanksgiving in the background. Love is shared throughout the household. Outside, you can hear the popping of fireworks. Children are running and playing. Surely, the presence of God is in this place.

Christmas is on its way, too! Now, the real reason for the season: Jesus. The celebration is just getting started. Praise and worship songs ring in the house. Family and friends are embraced with love. Gifts are exchanged with goodwill wishes. The thrill of children opening presents is on display. Pictures are taken and shared. The table is spread again with our favorite foods. Through it all, my holiday is filled with joy and happiness.

After that, New Year's Day. A traditional meal is spread on the table as family and friends look forward to the promises of God. Along with hope for a brighter future, we are thankful to God for bringing us through another year.

The clock ticks as we move closer to January 1. Fireworks in hand, family and friends put on a colorful show of thanks in the sky. Fun and joy spread throughout the neighborhood. Then we move to see the city firework show, which fills the air with bigger and brighter colors.

My holiday ends in prayer to God in Jesus' name. Again, He is the reason for the season. My holiday season means sharing the love of God.

Season's Greeting!

*Larry Jackson is a STREETZine vendor and participates in The Stewpot's Writers' Workshop.*

---

## What the Holidays Mean to Me

By Darin Thomas

I love the holidays. Christmas is a special day for families.

I get together with my family and we talk about old times, pass out presents, eat good food, and love on each other.

Thanksgiving is a great holiday as well. The family gets together and talks about what they are thankful for. It also is a time for eating turkey and dressing, cakes and pies. And we tell stories about old times, play games with family members, and talk about our Heavenly Father and how Jesus died for our sins so they would be forgiven.

The best thing about Thanksgiving and Christmas is waking up and being around family and friends. Now that I have my own apartment, I will get to invite them over to my place for the holidays. That is a blessing.

*Darin Thomas is a STREETZine vendor and participates in The Stewpot's Writers' Workshop.*



## What the Holidays Mean to Me

By Mike McCall

The holidays are here: A time to celebrate the changing of the season and the end to a year.

Cold breezes start to chill my skin and then my bones at this time of year. Depending on where I am as fall arrives, the leaves begin to change color and pure excitement hits us. Childhood memories, as well as cool weather, stick in my mind, starting around Halloween.

Then, temperatures drop further, and it is time to stay warm. People are happier and the weight gain comes as we prepare for Thanksgiving.

For most people, this is a chance to gather with family or friends and be thankful for the life we have been given. To hug the ones we still can and to remember those we can't.

If you don't have family near, people tend to band together in God. Being on the streets during the holidays taught me that no one in America ever gets left out, no matter what.

I personally have many things to be thankful for. First and foremost would be my freedom. I also am thankful for all the people who have helped me get back on my feet. Without places like The Bridge, The Stewpot, and Our Calling, I would be on the streets without food, shelter, or clothing. Parkland and MetroCare have also helped me get my mind right and body well.

So, when people ask what I possibly could be thankful for, I can simply tell them I've been given the world and a chance to live freely in it once again.

*Mike McCall is a participant in The Stewpot's Writers' Workshop.*

## What the Holidays Mean to Me

By Charles Duff

Unlike others I find the subject of holidays sort of bittersweet.

First, I believe that every day has its blessing. Just the fact that we were allowed a chance to see another sunrise after submitting ourselves completely to whatever fate awaits as we slumber is a blessing. We should always open our eyes with thanks.

Moving forward to Christmas, "Happy Holidays" seems to me as a Christian to be the shallowest of greetings, especially when we remember the reason for the season is the celebration of the birth of our savior Jesus Christ. The most precious gift of salvation, a life for our souls. God be praised that he gave us his very self, his son, to bear the horrible weight of our sins.

Selflessly he gave his son to atone for our wrongdoings. Wow! Can you imagine picking a more perfect gift, the gold ticket that grants you paradise for God so loved the world? You know what the greatest gift we can give is? Love.

For me, my favorite present as a child came from my Aunt Mae: \$5.00 in a little red and green card. Just a little love.

Though times may be grim, though bills may be behind, even if you're on the streets, heartbroken and torn, just remember this: There are things to be thankful for, no matter how small, and there is always a reason to love. To all of you who need to hear these words, and who actually wonder about the season, all you need is love.

*Charles Duff is a participant in The Stewpot's Writers' Workshop.*



*Picture courtesy of Jon Tyson through Unsplash.*

# Around the Stewpot

By Wendy Rojo

Believe it or not winter is upon us here in Texas. I like many others scoured the internet trying to find a new winter coat. For some it is not as easy as “add to cart” to get a new coat. Thankfully, The Stewpot offers a clothing closet. We recently had a coat event where clients were able to shop, at no charge to them, for a winter coat. I sat down with Virginia Salinas, the clothing closet coordinator, to discuss the event.

## How many clients received a coat during your event?

About 100 clients were given a variety of hygiene kits, blankets, sweatshirts, t-shirts, caps, and coats. The donations came from Stewpot staff, First Presbyterian Church members, and private organizations.

## Do you see a need increase during the winter?

The need is always present. However, it does increase in the colder weather because there are many clients who cannot obtain the necessary items to protect themselves against the harsh weather. I am grateful that people are willing to donate not only their items but their time.

## What does your clothing closet operation look like year-round?

We essentially create an event online which serves as an order form for our clients. We partnered with Trusted World, which provides us with clothing and personal care items. They have been an amazing partner not only during the holidays but year-round.

Trusted World was founded by Michael Garrett to help resolve situational poverty by providing a more effective donation process. They work closely with first responders by providing food, clothing, and personal care items. That way law enforcement can focus on their core mission and not spend time trying to find the much-needed resources.



***Stewpot clients were able to shop for their own winter coat. Photos Courtesy of Wendy Rojo.***

# Stewpot Artists



**Fernando Segovia**



**Jennifer Moore**



**Teresa Zacarias**

# Street Newspapers - A Voice for the Homeless & Impoverished

## What is **STREETZine**?

**STREETZine** is a nonprofit newspaper published by The Stewpot of First Presbyterian Church for the benefit of people living in poverty. It includes news, particularly about issues important to those experiencing homelessness. **STREETZine** creates direct economic opportunity. Vendors receive papers to be distributed for a one-dollar or more donation.



## Advertise in **STREETZine**

Support **STREETZine** and its vendors with your business or personal advertisements and announcements.

**Email:**

[streetzine@thestewpot.org](mailto:streetzine@thestewpot.org)

### Distributing **STREETZine** is protected by the First Amendment.

**STREETZine** vendors are self employed and set their own hours.

They are required to wear a vendor badge at all times when distributing the paper. In order to distribute **STREETZine**, vendors agree to comply with Dallas City Ordinances.

If at any time you feel a vendor is in violation of any Dallas City Ordinance please contact us immediately with the vendor name or number at [streetzine@thestewpot.org](mailto:streetzine@thestewpot.org)

### CHAPTER 31, SECTION 31-35 of the Dallas City Code PANHANDLING OFFENSES

Solicitation by coercion; solicitation near designated locations and facilities; solicitation anywhere in the city after sunset and before sunrise any day of the week. Exception can be made on private property with advance written permission of the owner, manager, or other person in control of the property.

A person commits an offense if he conducts a solicitation to any person placing or preparing to place money in a parking meter.

The ordinance specifically applies to solicitations at anytime within 25 feet of:

Automatic teller machines; Exterior public pay phones; Public transportation stops; Self service car washes; Self service gas pumps; An entrance or exit of a bank, credit union or similar financial institution; Outdoor dining areas of fixed food establishments.

## Want to be a vendor?

Come visit us at The Stewpot!

1835 Young Street, Dallas, TX 75201

Mondays at 1 PM or Friday mornings, or call 214-746-2785

## Want to help?

Buy a paper from a vendor!

*Buying a paper is the best way to support **STREETZine** and our vendors.*

Make a donation!

[thestewpot.org/streetzine](http://thestewpot.org/streetzine)

Write for us!

Contact us at [streetzine@thestewpot.org](mailto:streetzine@thestewpot.org)



Any other ideas? Take our survey:

<https://bit.ly/2WbMRsg>

**VENDOR #**