

JESUS CARES MINISTRIES

Restoring Individuals, Families, Marriages



WINTER 2022

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A Year of Struggle...

As most of you know, 2022 began with my husband struggling to survive COVID with already compromised lungs. His struggle ended on January 23 when he transitioned to his heavenly home. He was a warrior who fought well to the end. That is when my real struggle began. I struggled to know what ministry would look



Life is done best in community.
This community touched my struggling heart.



Shirley and Shandina mixing a custom facial.

like as a widow when so much of our work had been done side by side. I struggled to know how to communicate with my supporters, manage the finances, conduct board meetings and prepare reports. We were a great team and half of this team had crossed the finish line. What do I do with men he was mentoring and how do I ever pick up the pace we had kept for over 42 years in ministry?

We ran hard and strong but the baton now needed to be passed to new, competent runners! I am happy to share that this year has been an amazing testimony to faithful servants, mercies new every morning, God's sufficient grace and abundant provisions.

There are no words to convey the gratitude I feel as this year closes and I realize that so many were loved and cared for by capable hands and willing hearts submitted to the Master. As we have always believed.... The net works! Partnering with others in my grief absorbed my shock and kept me moving forward. Yes, my husband was that kernel of wheat that was planted in the ground yet a bountiful harvest has been reaped. Join me in thanking the Lord for the harvest of 2022.

Struggling through grief...

"Show Me the Father"

My grieving heart was eased with a lovely group of women whom we had helped over the years. We had walked beside them in their struggles and they so graciously turned to me in mine. They gave back much more to me as they surrounded me with comfort and encouragement throughout this grief journey. They were among the first that I met with for an evening of rest as we pampered ourselves with facials and foot soaks. Watching the beautiful documentary: *Show Me the Father*, reminded us of God's constant and miraculous provisions. It was a reminder to all of us of how the Father has walked beside us through our struggles.

For free downloadable music and resources visit: jesuscaresministries.org

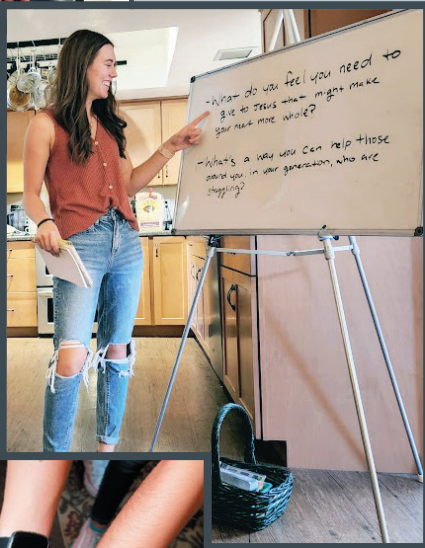
My struggle to begin again...

Grow Girls Enrichment

Grow Girls looked different this year! I felt an urgency to conduct an enrichment conference but I was not ready to jump into my normal load of teaching and training. In order to ease the burden I had for these young women, I called upon some of the women I had mentored over the years to help. They paid the girls surprise visits throughout the day. They brought lunch, dessert and some timely messages. Our theme was "Heart Healthy." We focused on guarding our hearts and feeding our spirits with the right food. Many thanks to Christa, Petra, Christina Lafferty, Shirley, and Duane for easing my struggle and investing in these precious souls.



We put the girls to work in this conference and challenged them to take action steps!



One of the visitors was my granddaughter, Petra! She filled in some gaps and stepped up to the call!



Petra helped the girls design bracelets that expressed, in Hebrew words, their desire to follow God with their whole hearts.

Children: Our Heritage...

The week Tom passed, I was scheduled to teach a parenting series at Freedom House. There was no way I could be present to do this. Though grieving herself, Kelley, my ministry partner, stood in the gap for me until I could teach the next series. She took over many of my responsibilities and I was so grateful for her expertise and ease in filling my shoes for the young women of Freedom House.



Doreen with two of her faithful students. Kelley stood by me for morale support as I felt strong enough to teach the series in September.

Struggling to fill Tom's shoes...

Help Wanted: Male Mentors

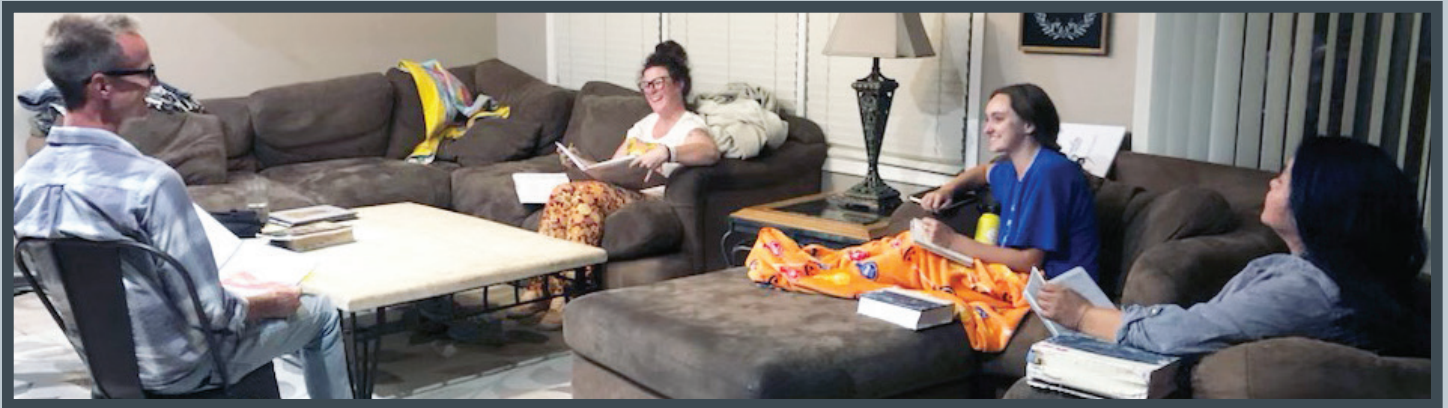
I did not have to look past my board to find capable male mentors to fill in the gaps. Jeff took on several of the men Tom had been counseling and discipling when he passed. Their struggles were real and they needed to know that Tom's death did not mean they were abandoned by God.



Jackie and Jeff are filling in lots of gaps.

Help Wanted: Teacher

Micah, board member and son-in-law filled this gap! He stepped up to the plate and his ability to teach quickly became evident. He helped with our parenting seminar and the classes at Freedom House. He also stepped in when one of the moms we were working with wanted guitar tips for her son.



Micah teaching Tom's "Theology of the Family" to the girls of Freedom House

Help Wanted: Grandpa

I received a call from one of my Aftercare moms. She was grieving that her son was without a good spiritual male mentor. Tom was always there to take this young man to lunch, help him wrestle with doubts and challenge his faith walk. Tim, another one of our board members, took on this task taking him to lunch and answering tough questions that his spiritual grandpa, Tom used to do. God once again provided!

Struggling to provide...

I know few people, personally, with a heart like Tom who was fearless when reaching out and as one of his daughter's mentioned at his memorial... few places were off limits to him! Logan from Hope in Christ is such a man. It has been over five years since he sat with us in our family room expressing his heartfelt desire to reach out to the most vulnerable of our city. He had more than just words. His actions had already proved the sincerity of his heart; he had already reached so many but wanted to be more effective by providing housing. It took us back to many years prior when that same desire burdened Tom's heart. He wanted to be more effective in reaching others and felt that opening our home was the next step. We resonated immediately with Logan and our hearts were joined! After Tom's passing, Logan completely took over our referral ministry. With your faithful support and Crystal and Logan's tireless efforts the following individuals, marriages and families who were struggling to provide for themselves were blessed:

- 26 homeless people got off the streets and we moved them into their own apartments to be self-sufficient going forward.
- 25 people placed into long-term programs/rehab facilities.
- 28 people received counseling for marriage and families.
- 15 apartments were fully furnished.
- 38 people were helped financially to help pay their rent to avoid eviction.
- 20 people received hotel rooms to get off the street while we worked to find them permanent housing.
- Numerous people got IDs, socials, birth certificates, jobs, clothing and food.
- Countless hospital visits praying and helping those before they passed on.
- Pop-up prayer table, giving prayer and guidance to anyone that passed by, including making connections with some people and being able to regularly bring them to church with us on Sunday.

Thank you, Lord, for our amazing partners and the many struggling hearts that you touched in 2022.

A struggle to remember...

Some of my sweet grands are so young; I struggled with the thought of them not remembering their papa. He was so good to all of them but I realized it would not be long before those tender memories would fade. I shared my struggle with a friend who has been connected with us for years and came to our very first women's retreat. I wanted to find a way to turn Tom's clothing into a gift that they could treasure forever. Well... my friend, Sarah D. had some ideas and swiftly went into action creating these amazing stuffies. God is so gracious. Each animal has a pocket in the back. I will place a picture of them with papa in that pocket. The clothing was handpicked and some of the items were worn at their parent's weddings or significant events, so they will all carry beautiful and lasting memories.



The Shelton brood!

A struggle to survive...

The year ended with one of the greatest gifts I could imagine! I was able to visit my spiritual daughter, Sarah, who had come to speak at Tom's memorial in March. I thought I was going to help her family as her husband was diagnosed with a genetic liver disease that progressed to stage four. There was little hope of him surviving. By the time I booked the tickets and was on my way, I received the amazing news that the disease was reversed and he was no longer dying! Spending time with my spiritual granddaughters was rejuvenating. They were full of life in spite of a year of watching their father's health weigh in the balance. The garden in their backyard was bountiful. Like with my journey, God made life bearable by sending many helping hands in the midst of their struggle! Though traumatized at their dad's recent stay in ICU with a slim chance that he

would emerge alive, these girls focused instead on making me happy and comfortable!

The Lord provided a surprise gift while I was there. Lillian, her youngest, was watching a cocoon form on their front porch. After I left, I was ecstatic to receive a picture of the fully formed butterfly resting on the flower that they had grown just for that purpose! A struggling butterfly had emerged. What a life lesson for me that just wrapped the year up so beautifully. Tom and I had planted a garden together. That garden was the souls of men and women whom we had cared for and nurtured over the years. That garden provided a place for me to land in my own struggle.



Strengthened in the struggle...

I am emerging from this struggle determined to begin a new journey. I am overwhelmed with the outpouring of love. Handmade quilts, cozy blankets, crafted pillows, comfort gifts, creative artwork and a strong faith community has held up my arms. My children, sons-in-law and grands have not ceased in being available to take care of every need imaginable. My visit to Florida to see Tom's family was a real gift and encouragement to my heart. Tom's sister is quite the preacher! His mama is still quite lively and we shed a few tears as we watched his memorial together. I was also able to have a brief visit there with a former pastor and his wife who were on our founding board. Eight widows or former widows are assisting me in my grief. They have gone before me in this struggle and have strengthened my resolve to get through this journey fruitful and faithful. ***I am grateful and humbled as the Lord reveals to me, through all of you that...***

Jesus Cares