

# CCU Christian Churches United of the Tri-County Area

413 S. 19th Street, Harrisburg, PA 17104 + (717) 230-9550 + [www.ccuhb.org](http://www.ccuhb.org)



## CCU Banquet, A Time of Sharing

By Jamar Thrasher, CCU Volunteer

For the past two years, I have dutifully served at the Christian Churches United banquet. For me, these banquets are a great opportunity to fellowship with believers of the faith and interact with community servants. In the past, guests were treated to live performances, keynote addresses, and unbelievable testimonies.

This year, the banquet was no different. Held at the Red Lion Hotel on Friday, November 10, 2023, the United in Love Banquet 2023 was an incredible event!

Rev. Derrick James, pastor of Agape Ministries and founder of Helping Individuals Succeed (H.I.S.), delivered the keynote speech to a rapt audience.

Rev. James expanded upon Jesus's life and ministry by emphasizing the bold and radical love that he had for all people. Jesus did not marginalize others by factors that seem to constrict potential service today: race, gender, and any other category a person may be placed in.

...continued on Page 2



## We Are CCU!

By Nick Mucci, Director of Development

*"Jesus is the hope of the world and the local church is the vehicle of expressing that hope to the world."* - Andy Stanley

Jamar's reflections on our United in Love banquet vividly depict the events of November 10th, 2023, at the Red Lion Hotel's banquet hall. The impactful messages from Rev. James and Lisa's powerful testimony of conquering love and strength lingered in the minds of attendees for weeks.

For CCU, the sight of each representative from churches and other partners across the Tri-County Area served as a powerful reminder. CCU exists because churches, spanning denominations, geographical locations, and ethnic backgrounds, have come together to be Christ's church, dedicated to serving those in the midst of crises and offering Love for the Journey.

While CCU's staff actively responds to Christ's call to love neighbors, the true identity of Christian Churches United is reflected in its 140+ Member Churches. These churches engage and serve in their communities through CCU, collectively providing hope, housing, and support for hundreds of households throughout the city.

Together, WE ARE CCU!

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The keynote message was endearing because I have often had to reevaluate myself when it comes to how I show up for people. As a Christ follower, I am told to love others. This is so important.

I have had to rely on GOD to determine if I am giving myself fully in love (as Christ would) to my fellow brothers and sisters. The keynote speech taught me that, differences aside, we are all under the grace of GOD. If Christ, who is GOD in the flesh, humbled himself and served — from spending his first moments on earth in poverty so low that he was with barn animals — how much, then, do we owe, if we are truly earnest in our attempts to be like Christ?

Advocacy for the unhoused was also on full display at the banquet. The event had an arranged setup of a tent to simulate housing conditions for the homeless. This was incredibly touching for me as I have been able to volunteer with CCU and as well as Tent Valley Ministries at various housing encampments across the city. Additionally, lunch packs were left on tables for people to deposit money in — a symbolic act of putting a blessing into a resource (the lunch pack) commonly used by the unhoused population.

There was staff and client appreciation. It was great to see the people who have been leading in service ministry.

A crowning moment came during a powerful testimony. A woman shared who had faced homelessness and twice battled serious health issues, overcame her obstacles with the staff of CCU. She is now in stable housing and her son will be starting college soon! This story taught me so much about hope and resilience!

CCU is a necessary balm in Harrisburg. Connecting area churches with a core mission is integral to what CCU does. As Rev. James preached at the banquet— love is within us all, we just have to share it.



### JOIN THE TEAM - CCU IS HIRING!

CCU has open F/T & P/T positions available across the various Ministries! These positions include: Director of Finance (FT) and Supportive Services Assistant (PT - Safe Haven). If you or someone you know is interested in joining the team at CCU, please visit all our jobs postings on Indeed.com or send a cover letter and resume to [jobs@ccuhbg.org](mailto:jobs@ccuhbg.org).

Scan here for our Indeed.com page





For the fifth year musicians from across Central PA rallied together to put together the Joy to the Burg Christmas Album to support the homeless services work of CCU. Joy to the Burg has raised over \$185,000 and counting these past five years! We cannot say "Thank you" enough! There are so many people involved in this project, all with the goal of supporting and encouraging those who are unsheltered. This is a note we received from one of the guests at the Women & Non-Binary Shelter:

*"This experience has been humbling and at times very difficult and trying but, the overnight shelter is a beautiful place to stay with kind, caring staff and a safe environment for many different kinds of people. It is a wonderful place to stay and I am very grateful for it. I have made more friends than I ever have in my life...I have a sense of stability, oddly. I could get kicked out of my house for breathing too loud before but here I know I am safe...I thank you for helping me find this. I am very grateful...All in all, I am doing much better. I appreciate you and the help you've given me...You are doing God's work for sure."*

Thank you for your support and participation with Joy to the Burg over these past 5 years, we look forward to many more years of bringing Joy to those who are unsheltered across the 'Burg!

Purchase the Album or Donate by scanning the QR!



Photo: Left to Right (Volunteers Aisha Mobley & Jamar Thrasher with Santa, Antonio Andrade opens, Santa reads to kids on the floor, Santa & Concert Attendees at the photo booth. Bottom: Amy Simpson & Greg Platzer of Groove Rebels; Shea Quinn & Glenn Hamilton. Photo Credit: Chris Rider Photography

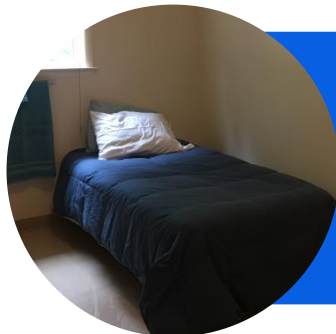
## Towards Beloved Community

by Darrel Reinford, Executive Director CCU

It was so good to gather again this year with brothers and sisters from both sides of the river to celebrate the life and work of Martin Luther King Jr. CCU, as part of the Race & Unity Action Coalition, helped organize the worship service and panel discussion which took place at Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church in uptown Harrisburg on Sunday afternoon, Jan. 14. Macedonia’s choir led us in an invigorating time of singing & Pastor Rodney Smalls from Macedonia challenged us to reach out to and walk with those living in the tombs, just as Jesus did with the man in Mark 5. Following the service, the members of our panel discussed how we can have a theology of doing – working together towards the Beloved Community. We invite everyone to join us in February at a follow-up discussion event that we call a Chat & Chew, coming to share with each other steps we’ve taken to work towards racial justice. The Chat and Chew will be held at Mt. Calvary Episcopal Church on Saturday, Feb. 24th, 10 am– 12pm. Scan the QR to RSVP!



The 25.40 Monthly Support Team:  
Program sustaining monthly donors that give \$25,  
\$40 or another amount that fits your budget.  
Making a regular, monthly donation is a vital way  
to invest in changing lives at CCU.



“I’m telling the solemn truth: Whenever  
you did one of these things to someone  
overlooked or ignored, that was me—  
you did it me.”

*Matthew 25.40 (The Message)*

Monthly Support is a Convenient way to give,  
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\$25/month = \$300/yr	\$100/month = \$1,200/yr
\$40/month = \$480/yr	\$150/month = \$1,800/yr
\$75/month = \$900/yr	\$250/month = \$3,000/yr



Are you ready to join?  
Sign up now on our  
Monthly Donation Page.  
Join the team today and  
receive one of our 25.40  
logo stickers!

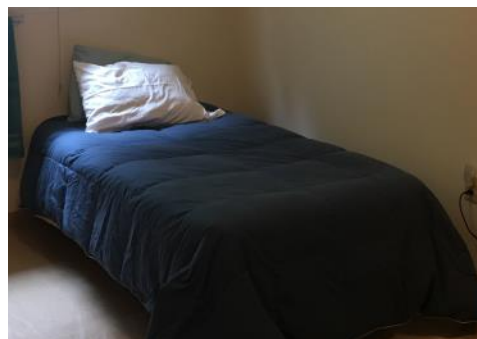
Already on the team?  
Don't have your sticker?  
Email Nick at  
nmucci@ccuhbg.org and  
tell him you want your  
sticker!



# WELCOME HOME SAFE HAVEN



When men leave the streets and move into Susquehanna Harbor Safe Haven, we want to welcome them home. The men who move into SHSH arrive with very few personal belongings. The items on this list allow us to present the men with a fresh start & provide them with the warmth & security they deserve.



## WELCOME HOME SAFE HAVEN KITS

### Essentials Kit:

- Twin Sheet Set & Blanket
- Pillow
- Towel and Washcloth
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrush
- Deodorant
- Mouthwash (non-alcohol based)
- Body wash for men
- Shampoo and Conditioner
- Collapsible Laundry Bag

### Helpful Items:

- various size underwear (no boxers)
- socks
- white T-Shirts
- slippers (size 9-12)
- pajama pants (various sizes)
- robe (various sizes)
- Hair clippers
- Book Bag
- Mini fan
- Book Night Light

Susquehanna Harbor Safe Haven is a ministry of Christian Churches United. Christian Churches United is a 501(c)3 non-profit social service agency founded as a collaboration of area churches to help those facing homelessness, poverty and incarceration. For questions about how you or your church group, civic group, co-workers, VBS or other group can collect Welcome Home Safe Haven Kits, contact Nick Mucci, Director of Development ([nmucci@ccuhbg.org](mailto:nmucci@ccuhbg.org)) or Denise Sturnes, SHSH Program Manager ([dsturnes@ccuhbg.org](mailto:dsturnes@ccuhbg.org)). Kits can be delivered to SHSH at 1805 N 12th St. Harrisburg, PA 17103



# MEMORIAL BLANKET PROJECT REFLECTIONS

Rev. Matthew Best, Christ Lutheran Church

*(excerpts from his blog post found at [www.pastormatthewbest.com](http://www.pastormatthewbest.com) )*

Thursday, December 21, 2023 was the third annual Memorial Blanket Project art installation. In 2021, it was hosted in Carlisle, PA. Last year it was at the West Lawn of the US Capitol. And this year, it was hosted at the PA Capitol. Each year, we never know how many blankets we will have, who is going to show up to help out, or what the weather will be like. And each year more blankets than we guess show up, volunteers come out of the woodwork, and the weather is amazing. This year we worked in conjunction with partners in Akron, OH, who also had an installation of blankets and together we had over 1200 blankets.



This was the first year that those who were without a house or shelter were right there at the event and we were able to give out blankets, gloves, and socks to people during the event. We had the honor of interviewing one of these folks for our podcast so he could share his lived experience. Another woman wandered into the event wearing just a shirt. It looked as though she had just been released from some kind of medical facility, but we didn't know for sure. We did know that without a blanket and some direction to the local shelter, she may not have survived the night. These instances and interactions put human faces and names on what poverty and homelessness is about. It's about real lives and real people.

Using the blankets as an art installation is an act of symbolism. It conveys a clear visual message that cannot be ignored when it is seen. Each blanket will have someone wrapping it around them very soon, if not already. That's over 700 people just in the Harrisburg area alone. Every society will have the poor. It's our responsibility to see the humanity of those in poverty and on the margins and in so doing, to see ourselves in them. And to see the value and worth they bring to a society. And to hear their voice and their stories so that we can make adjustments so that others don't fall into poverty. The poor will always be with us. And part of that is seeing our own poverty as well.



The Memorial Blanket Project is impactful. It is meaningful. It is symbolic. It is inconvenient. It is eye opening. It is affirming. It is humanity.

To read Matthew's full post and to see more of his pictures visit <https://pastormatthewbest.com/memorial-blankets-2023>

**An attitude of gratitude is crucial for each person throughout their life. CCU is incredibly grateful for all the many different foundations, organizations, churches, and businesses who partner in serving our neighbors facing homelessness, poverty, and incarceration. We just want to take a moment to express our gratitude to some of those partners.**

- |  |                                 |                               |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| The Donald B. and Dorothy L. Stabler Foundation    | UPMC                            | CommunityAid                  |
| The Alexander Boyd and Jane Starke Boyd Foundation | UPMC Health Plan                | Members 1st                   |
| The Thomas J McCormac III Foundation               | Ollies                          | Pennian Bank                  |
| The McCormick Family Foundation                    | Miracle Ear                     | Orrstown Bank                 |
| The Josiah W. and Bessie H. Kline Foundation       | Rotary of Harrisburg            | Homeland Center               |
| Allison Hill Fund                                  | Abrams and Weakley              | Fox's Wash and Go             |
| TFEC - The Foundation for Enhancing Communities    | Culligan Water of Mechanicsburg | Wonders Found Thrift Shop     |
|  | Capital Blue                    | PennLive                      |
|  | Highmark                        | Central PA Music Hall of Fame |
|  | Penn State Health               | Karn's Grocery Stores         |
|  | Thrivent Financial              | GK Visual                     |

Change the life of a neighbor in need!

# HELP Ministries GOLF Tournament

47th!  
Annual

Monday, June 3, 2024

Sunset Golf Course

2601 Sunset Drive, Middletown, PA

Register your Foursome Today!

Scan below to register and sponsor



For questions about the tournament, contact Nick Mucci, Director of Development, [nmucci@ccuhbg.org](mailto:nmucci@ccuhbg.org)

# LAUNDRY ANGELS

FIRST SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH



A great opportunity for your church, small group, or business to sponsor (\$300) and serve our unhoused neighbors. For more info contact [info@ccuhbg.org](mailto:info@ccuhbg.org)

There is also an opportunity for a lead CCU Volunteer with Laundry Angels. For more info contact Nick Mucci at [nmucci@ccuhbg.org](mailto:nmucci@ccuhbg.org)



Volunteers Needed!

## Winter Overnight Shelters

Of Christian Churches United



The Winter Overnight Shelters run through March 31st. To sign-up to volunteer at the shelter or in other ways, please visit [www.ccuhbg.org/volunteer](http://www.ccuhbg.org/volunteer) or contact Kendall Beverly, [kbeverly@ccuhbg.org](mailto:kbeverly@ccuhbg.org) for the Women & Non-Binary Winter Overnight Shelter, or Denise Sturnes, [dsturnes@ccuhbg.org](mailto:dsturnes@ccuhbg.org) for the Men's Winter Overnight Shelter.



of the Tri-County Area

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# Christian Churches United

of the Tri-County Area

## DONATE TO

### CommunityAid

Donations made to CommunityAid on behalf of CCU supports CCU!

CCU receives financial support because of YOUR donation! Cut this card out and bring with your donation.



They accept :

- Clothes
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- Toys
- Household Items
- Electronics
- Sporting Goods
- Linens
- Decorations
- Furniture

### CommunityAid Donation Card

I am making this donation on behalf of  
Christian Churches United  
Partner #: 10371

**2024 HIGHMARK WALK**

Christian Churches United  
May 18, 2024  
Get your teams ready!  
Registration opening soon!

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Share the love

Share the love

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