



Hands of Compassion

A Ministry of The Rochester Church Of Christ



**840 W. Center Street
Rochester, MN 55902**



An Amazing Legacy



The Hands of Compassion Ministry (HOC) lost an amazing woman. Meridell Gilreath passed away on December 30, 2021 at the age of 93. She had been a member of the Rochester church of Christ since the early 60's and was a huge servant during the early days of this ministry. As many of you know, HOC began in the homes of members of the Rochester church of Christ, and Gerald and Meridell Gilreath were a major part of that early ministry. Before the purchase of the original house in 1985, people would call the Rochester church of Christ looking for housing while they were in Rochester for the Mayo Clinic. Gerald and Meridell could be counted on week after week, to have guests staying in their house. They would not only provide beds for their guests, but they would even feed them while they were staying in their house. Their home was a welcome place regardless of the time of year, as they would have guests in their house even on holidays

such as Thanksgiving and Christmas. Meridell was always dedicated to spreading Christ's love to everyone she met.

Meridell was an evangelistically minded woman until the very end. She always had an attitude that wherever she was, God had put her there with purpose. When she left independent living and went to live in a nursing home, I had the opportunity to visit her. We were talking about the challenge that moving to a nursing home was, when she made this statement that I will never forget, "When I was first told I would be moving here, I really just didn't want to do that. But shortly after I got here, I realized that God had put me here for a purpose. My job is now to share Jesus with the people here in this home." Meridell was known at the Samaritan Bethany nursing home for sitting across the table from others at lunch or supper times and talking about Jesus. She was a soft spoken woman, but she was never afraid to share her faith. Everyone knew what was important to her. She would openly talk about how she wasn't afraid of dying, because she knew she would be with God.

The impact that this amazing woman had on so many people will never be forgotten. Her godly courage and servant heart left a huge mark on the hearts of those who have walked into her life. The Hands of Compassion organization would not be the same place today without the dedication that she showed in serving people in Rochester, MN.

In the newsletter from the Summer of 2021 we published an article from the Rochester Post Bulletin, dated December 23, 1983 in which the Gilreath family was featured. You can view the article using the QR code to the right or by visiting <https://www.hocrochester.com/meridell-article>.



Thank you, Jim & Carol Fincher



We want to offer our sincere thanks to Jim and Carol Fincher. Jim and Carol have come to us from Idaho to help us out for a few months while we search for new house parents. They have already made a tremendous impact, both for guests of the Hands of Compassion, as well as the church here in Rochester. From the time they walked in the door, they have been working tirelessly fixing up and painting different areas of the house. They are a wonderful, ministry-minded couple who wishes to put God first in all that they do! We are so thankful that they are willing to serve our ministry through the month of April.

We are still looking for you to come be a part of this ministry. The Hands of Compassion is still looking for house parents to come in and fill the role that Chris and Cindy Frazier had in ministering to people in the original House of

Compassion. God has always blessed our ministry by sending the right people at the right time, and we are asking that you consider that God may be calling you to this ministry. This is an incredibly rewarding ministry, as house parents develop deep friendships with the people who walk through our doors. You will be able to bond with people in some of the most difficult moments of their lives. The Hands of Compassion provides an amazing opportunity to share God's love with people who are struggling with their health. Through our ministry, you will have the opportunity to share God's love, not just with members of the churches of Christ, but with people who may have never felt the love of Jesus before. The Hands of Compassion provides an amazing opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

If you are interested in sending a resume, you may send it by email to hocministry@gmail.com or mail it to:

Hands of Compassion

840 W. Center Street

Rochester, MN 55902

For more information about the position, including a job description, use the QR code provided,

or visit our website at <https://www.hocrochester.com/houseparent-job-description>



You are God's blessing to HOC!

In 2020, God blessed us with a \$30,000 matching grant that you responded to quickly! Within a few months of making you aware of the grant, we were able to raise the \$30,000 necessary for a total of \$60,000 toward our fund for a new house. Despite huge challenges in 2020 and 2021, God has blessed us with multiple donations, both contributing to our ability to operate the ministry, as well as investment in the future of HOC toward our new expansion. Lord willing, we are hoping to begin building in 2023 or 2024, and you have us well on our way. As of the time of this writing you have raised \$1.25 million of the \$1.9 million needed to begin building. We are now only \$651,782 short of our goal, and are in the final stretch. Thank you so much for all that you have given!

We now have another opportunity to double your donations. A board member has offered a matching grant of \$30,000 for the purpose of raising money for this house. Two thirds of this donation will go toward the building fund, with one third of the donation toward current operations of the ministry. Our goal is to raise this \$30,000 by July of 2022. If you would like your donation to go towards this matching grant, please send in your check to 840 W. Center Street, Rochester, MN 55902 and specify "matching grant" in the memo section. You can also donate online by using the QR code to your right, or visiting our website at <https://www.hocrochester.com/donate>. In the "special instructions" section, specify "matching grant donation."



Thank you so much for blessing our ministry through your incredible generosity and prayer!

Memorials and Honorariums—October through January

Memorials

LeAnn Nading Anderson

Gary & Joanne Nading

Dick Breezee

Luraine Kinkel

Edward K. (Sonny) Bryant

Janet Ovens
Larry & Karen Coffrey
Marc & Shelly Florian

Lori Bufe

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Bufe

Martharene Jones Byram

Gary Byram

Jim Franklin

Ronald & Linda Sandefer

David Goins

Judy Goins

Jerry Hess

Gladys Willis

Kate Howard

Robert & Elizabeth Howard

Meridell Gilreath

Mary Martin
Linda Olivet
Janis Tanner

Howard & Leona Merches

Susanne Keller

Bev Roden

Gladys Willis

Jessica Sikes

Steve & Patti Sikes

Lois Smith

Gladys Willis

Ralph Sitter

Bonnie Sitter

Jimmie Strand

Ronald & Linda Sandefer

Robert & Marion Stinchfield

Sheridan

Jerry F. Toogood

Bill & Donna Knadel

Charles Ulmer

Dee Yarbrough

Tony Vaughn

Roy & Thelma Kirkpatrick

Kenneth Wright

Donna Wright

Honorariums

Dan & Donna Bailey

Orrin & Marjory Nearhoof

Rodney & Sherry Littleton

Billy & Shirley Littleton

Gary & Joanne Nading

Gulf Shores church of Christ
Gladys Willis

Robbie Sikes

Barney Blue

Stacy & Carol Sikes

Therman & Sadie Hodge
Mary Alice McConkey

Honor A Loved One

As we are raising money for our new expansion, we are offering an opportunity for you to honor someone you love. With a \$50,000 donation toward our new expansion house we will honor your loved one by naming a room in the new house after them. This is a wonderful way to memorialize the people who have made a difference in your life!

How Can I Help?

There are a number of ways to give to the Hands of Compassion Ministry. You can donate by mail,

use the QR code, or visit

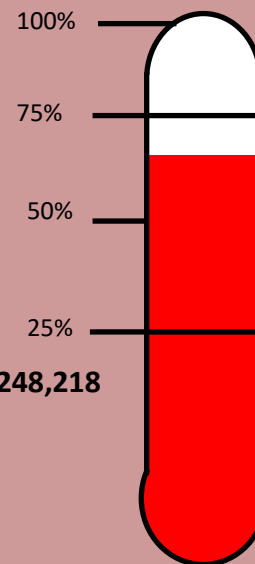
www.hocrochester.com/donate to donate electronically. Also use the website to find information on donating your estate through a will. There are many other ways to give as well. Pray for our ministry! Donate supplies or HyVee gift cards that can be used for our guests. Donate parking cards for people who struggle with having money to park at the Mayo Clinic. Thank you!



Donate

Funds Collected For New, Integrated, More Accessible HOC Expansion!

Goal—\$1,900,000



Raised—\$1,248,218



Donate to HOC anytime you make purchases through Amazon. Simply type in smile.amazon.com and select Hands of Compassion Ministry Rochester, MN as your charity!



Hands of Compassion Ministry
A Ministry of the church of Christ
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Rochester, MN 55902

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Rochester, MN 55902

Electronic Service Requested

Please email us at hocministry@gmail.com if you have any address changes.

Feeling Forsaken

When I was growing up, whenever anyone would ask me about the book of Psalms, I would tell them that they are all about praising God. And many of the Psalms are about just that. I believed at the time that when you talk to God, it should always be with flowery language and about His greatness; that talking to God should never involve negative thoughts. And then I read Psalm 22 where the first verse reads, **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?”** I had known my whole life that Jesus said those words on the cross. It was told to me in Bible classes since I was in kindergarten, but to find it in the Psalms? That is remarkable! And then I got to thinking, “Are we allowed to say that to God?” There have been times in my life when I felt forsaken by God. One such time was when I watched my infant son go through three major surgeries his first year of life. For about two months during that time I had to stick an NG tube in his nose every night, watching him struggle and cry through the pain of it. Talk about feeling forsaken!

David (the author of Psalm 22) goes on to talk about how evil men mock him, how his bones are on display, how evil men are casting lots for his clothing. Sound familiar? All of these things happened to Jesus on the cross. But there is another part of this Psalm that we often don't think of when we talk about this subject. Verse 19 says, **“But you, Lord, do not be far from me. You are my strength; come quickly to help me.”** From this point on in this Psalm, David talks about how he does trust that God is with him, and that all men who fear the Lord should praise Him. David is honest with God about how he is feeling, he doesn't hold back, but he still remembers that he is never alone! God is with him, even through the troubles in life. **GOD IS STILL WORTHY OF PRAISE!** Remember that, when life is a struggle, God is still our refuge and our strength. He does not leave you, even when it's hard to see Him! - Phillip Quelle

Contact Information for Donations and Reservations

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Come see us on Facebook at:

House of Compassion—Rochester, MN