

SUMMER 2024 UPDATE LETTER

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www.brotherjoeyouthandstreetministry.com

DETROIT IS CHANGING – I just started my 48th year in the Youth and Street Ministry in Detroit Michigan. For years back in the late 1970's we were picking up Bus Kids for Sunday School and taking them to the Rochester Hills Baptist Church on Sundays from an area nick-named the "Cass Corridor". That area ran several blocks along Cass Avenue between Woodward and 3rd just North of Detroit's old business district, the Cass Corridor back in the 1970's through the early 2000's was Detroit's heaviest Drug and Prostitution area a Detroit mixture of Skid Row a Red Light District and Hell's Kitchen.

After the Super Bowl in Detroit back in 2006 when the Steelers and the Sea Hawks played, longtime vacant store fronts were cleaned up and used, Detroit's investors saw what the City could be and an Invasion of Business investors came both downtown, the Cass Corridor and other areas all over the City either have been or are in the midst of massive renovation.

More recently the notorious Victory Inn was closed and demolished and much of Michigan Avenue is also being renovated also. And now "Motel Hell #3" on Telegraph Road has been cleaned up as the Detroit Police chased off the Drug Dealers and the Prostitution crowd, and then ironically the closed down Jazz Club next door that we used to preach, feed and clothe people in front of is now a legal POT SHOP! NO JOKE! So much for cleaning out the drugs Huh?

Our years of preaching feeding and clothing Homeless folks at Hart Plaza is probably gone also as investors and the City are renovating that area to the tune of 9 Million Dollars.

Last year on Friday night May/26/2023 The Detroit Police came along and shut us down while we were Street Preaching, feeding and clothing a big crowd. For the very first time in over 4 decades at the "Spanish Alley" in South West Detroit's 5th Police Precinct, the Police stopped us. That night we had Pastor Mike Ragan and two of his men from the Bible Believers Church in South Lyon Michigan with us and I was humiliated that this all happened in front of visitors and both Miss Lisa and my hearts were crushed after all these years on the streets to be very abruptly shut down by the Police who have always been very thankful for our Ministry and all we do for people until that night... IT WAS BRUTAL!

FORD MOTOR COMPANY? In November of 2023 I received a message from George Hunter from the Detroit News and he asked me if I had any problems from the FORD Motor Company. I was honestly clueless and he went on to explain the FORD had bought and was

renovating the Michigan Central Train Station to the tune of \$350 Million Dollars, which their investments now stand at \$950 Million dollars, that's almost a BILLION DOLLARS FOLKS!

FORD was kicking the Homeless encampment out from behind the Train Station and the Homeless folks were being removed from the entire old "Cork Town" neighborhood.

"THOSE KIND OF PEOPLE" Once again we were facing the old truth that the Homeless folks, Drunkards, Drug Addicts, Prostitution Crowd were in the way, and both "Urban Renewal", New Business Investors and the dreaded "Gentrification" where the longtime residents from the old neighborhoods get displaced as rents and taxes go up with renovated property values.

The night we got kicked out we were in part of "Mexican Town" just a few blocks from the Michigan Central Train Station area and this is all part of the redevelopment of the area and FORD, the Police and City and other Investors do not want "Those Kind Of People" OR OUR TYPE OF MINISTRY there!

I talked to the City Council President Mary Sheffield and though She and her staff would back us and so does the City's food service Codes, unfortunately there are Side Walk "ORDINANCES" that prohibits us to feed on the sidewalk, and blocking the sidewalk traffic with clothing bags or using loud speakers. The SIDEWALKS are the issue but of course the crowd we minister to is the real issue.

Not my choice or idea but we have been partially blocked from doing our Ministry in South West Detroit's 4th Police Precinct.

#OPERATION BACK TO THE FUTURE- In December I received a phone call from Danny who some folks call "Pack Rat" and he is the security guard at a closed down business and he and 4 others were living in the guard shack as security, we started feeding, clothing, singing and preaching in a back lot behind the alley in the 4th Precinct and that has worked out perfectly so far!

Plus we restarted feeding doorway to doorway, in alleys and in abandoned buildings, both feeding and tending to our Homeless crowd and so far we are good as long as we do not block or use the sidewalks. We can still preach on the sidewalk but we cannot set up tables and bags of clothing... It is just the "OPTICS".

Like I said NOT MY CHOICE... But things are changing as Detroit is going through massive renovation. Personally painful but the "New Detroit" kind of doesn't want Brother Joe & Miss Lisa anymore!

BROTHER JOE'S HEALTH – *"A few aches a few pains and a few bad veins."*

I had COVID-19 in late January early February 2022 and it did not seem like a big deal at first, but a few weeks later my right hand puffed up and looked like a Boxing Glove, at first I

thought it was from scratching it on an Ocean stone Jetty wall during Bike Week in Daytona in March 2022.

With in days the swelling went down to my waist and spine, then down to my knees and then ankles, feet and toes then within a few weeks the swelling went away. I've had a few normal upper respiratory infections but in April - May of 2023 I contracted C.A.P. or Community Acquired Pneumonia and the swelling in my calves, ankles and feet returned. I went to the Doctor and after a test they said during COVID 4 veins in my legs filled up with fluids from my Lymph System. I just had my 3rd of 4 Vascular Ablation procedures now in 2024.

They are not very painful and the only really bad thing is that the Doctors and staff have told me that I can't lift anything over heavier than a gallon of milk for a few days afterwards which really does not fit in with our ministry where so many days I'm loading and unloading thousands of pounds of Homeless Clothing bags, canned goods and other food and hygiene items. But this too will soon be over and hopefully I will be able to get back at it like before and the veins in my legs will simply reroute the blood flow.

I've had several bad back bouts which according to my Chiropractor is a simple case of twisted hips.

MISS LISA'S HEALTH – Miss Lisa has had occasional Migraine Headaches off and on for years but for the most part she has that under control (except for Brother Joe here, who is no doubt her biggest headache). She has a few other minor issues but overall, Miss Lisa is doing very well health-wise.

OPERATION SOUTHERN SOULS –

We have had the opportunity to link up with work more out of State with Pastor David Peacock and the dear folks at the Bible Believers Baptist Church in Jacksonville Florida and this was initially at Brother Peacock's invitation. And this invitation was over a year before the Detroit Police and FORD Motors kicked us out while they were still doing their cleanup of Michigan Central Train Station in the old Cork Town neighborhood in the 4th Police Precinct in Southwest Detroit.

For decades now we have street preached at Bike Week, Biketoberfest and Spring Break in the Daytona Beach Florida area and worked with Homeless folks in an area called "The Hill" and now we have started Ministering to Homeless folks in Downtown Jacksonville as well and it is AMAZING! I would have already done much more down there by now and in Detroit had I not gotten sick with Pneumonia followed by COVID Vascular Ablation procedures on my legs.

I have had to deal with a few sore back issues which has temporarily slowed me down but at 63 years old and doing all the heavy lifting and delivering literally tons of clothing and loads of food as well as preaching on the Streets, I guess I actually doing really well and I am looking forward to attempting more and new things for the Lord... Lord Willing.

We have an upcoming News Booklet called "Operation Back To The Future" or #Operationbacktothefuture about this past Fall through Springs Street Ministry plus we are putting out our newest tract Booklet called "The Preachers Daughter." That I hope will challenge and change lives and encourage the Wayward, Lukewarm and Backslidden on the Streets.

Love Y'all For the Streets, Brother Joe

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