****

**Minute for Mission**

**Embodying Kindness**

For Shawn Duncan, it’s the little things — like getting a birthday card — that mean a lot. Perhaps it’s because Shawn, a military veteran living in Las Vegas, hadn’t had a mailbox in years. Or a home.

A native of Michigan with no strong family ties, Shawn had been struggling for years with homelessness and mental health issues — including PTSD — when a chance encounter on Facebook with his former youth pastor changed the direction of his life.

Shawn’s life-changing introduction was to [Caridad Gardens](https://lasvegassun.com/news/2019/nov/11/caridad-downtown-community-garden-homeless-vets/), a Las Vegas-based nonprofit dedicated to helping and “humanizing the homeless.” Caridad Gardens offers job skills training and mental, emotional and physical wellness programs. Its founder, Merideth Spriggs, a former youth pastor, was once homeless herself after losing her job and her home.

“I realized if homelessness could happen to me, it could happen to anybody; and that I could be a unique voice. Even though I really felt God’s calling on my life to do this, most days I would not have picked this — and still don’t pick this— but I do not feel released from my calling.”

“Merideth has been a big inspiration to me,” said Shawn. “She is not someone who is just talking about something, but she’s actually doing something. She’s not necessarily beating people over the head with the Bible, she’s actually living it — walking the walk and treating people with kindness and respect.”

Shawn said that Caridad Gardens gives him something to be a part of and lets him know who he wants to be.

“Meeting people and forming relationships, where we share common things — our struggle with mental health, our struggle with homelessness — we’re able to support each other,” continued Shawn.

[Caridad Gardens](https://www.facebook.com/CaridadLV/)’ mission is made possible, in part, through a grant from the [Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/sdop/), which is in turn supported by generous gifts to [One Great Hour of Sharing](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/donate/og300000/). The Offering also benefits the ministries of the [Presbyterian Hunger Program](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/hunger/) and [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance](https://pda.pcusa.org/situation/blue-tshirts/).

Coming from the “church world,” it’s natural for Merideth to ask what Jesus would do.

“I tell people Jesus says you should feed the homeless, but he doesn’t stop there,” she said. “Jesus didn’t call us to give people a stale peanut butter and jelly sandwich — he called us to be in community. We’re called to be with our neighbors.”

“Giving to the Offering creates an opportunity to be intentional about embodying justice and hope by involving them in the changing of lives and communities in deeply profound and healing ways,” said the Rev. Dr. Alonzo Johnson, coordinator of [the Self-Development of People](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/sdop/).

Which is what One Great of Hour Sharing is designed to do.

Please give generously and join with others to be intentional about embodying justice and hope. And remember — when we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

***Let us pray~***

*Gracious God, you call us into community and command us to love our neighbor. May we seek and find real ways to embody justice and hope, reflecting your deep kindness for all you create and love. Bless our giving, that it might make a difference to our neighbors. We pray in Christ’s compassionate name.***Amen.**