



Your twice-a-month e-newsletter from Citygate Network

Useful news and information for members

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Alaska Ruling May Set Precedent

A recent verdict by Sharon Gleason, a U.S. District Court judge for the District of Alaska, [ended a lawsuit the Downtown Hope Center](#) (a Citygate Network member) brought against the City of Anchorage. The suit came about when the city revised an ordinance to say that places of accommodation cannot discriminate based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Judge Gleason dismissed the case for “lack of standing,” essentially saying the ministry does NOT have to accept biological men into its women-only shelter because it is NOT a place of public accommodation. This means the Downtown Hope Center will not be required to admit trans-identifying biological males into its open-room female dorm. Additionally, it is also entitled to seek legal fees from the city. The question as to whether a rescue mission or similar ministry is a place of public accommodation has been hotly debated in recent years.

Members Invited to Regroup on COVID-19 Matters

We know all of you are on COVID overload. Over the last couple weeks, many of you have told us that your staff has been reduced by up to 15 percent with team members testing positive for the omicron variant (for the most part). And a few of you have said that your numbers are even higher in the mission/ministry general population. Fortunately, hospitalizations are nowhere near what they were a year ago (even though we are aware of several serious cases and the deaths of two staff members). You need to know that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has revised its guidance for shelters. (We let CEOs know about this a week ago in the executive leadership connect group.) They are recommending a 10-day quarantine for residents, regardless of vaccination and booster status. During periods of critical staffing shortages, facilities may consider shortening the quarantine period for staff to ensure continuity of operations. Decisions to shorten quarantine in these settings should be made in consultation with state, local, or health departments and should take into consideration the context and characteristics of the facility. [Specific detailed guidance for homeless populations](#) can be found on the CDC website.

[Register here to join a CDC-hosted webinar](#) titled *Quarantine and Isolation in Correctional Facilities and Homeless Service Sites* on January 20, 2022, from 1:00 p.m.—2:00 p.m. ET. The CDC will review the updated quarantine and isolation recommendations for these settings and three communities will share how they have adapted their quarantine and isolation approaches during the current surge of COVID-19.

We'll also host our own member-wide Zoom call on Wednesday, February 2, at noon Mountain Time (that's 2:00 p.m. ET, 1:00 p.m. CT, and 11:00 a.m. PT). Dr. Emily Mosites from the CDC will join us again to provide updated, pertinent information and insight about the COVID-19 situation. Members will have the opportunity to ask questions about current and future COVID-related concerns. To register members from your team, [please click here](#).

Vaccine Mandate Blocked at Federal Level

Back when the OSHA's vaccine-or-test mandate for companies with more than 100 employees was announced, Citygate Network provided members with a resource on how to prepare in case the

roadblocks thrown in front of it were removed. As expected, they weren't. The U.S. Supreme Court blocked the Biden administration from enforcing its sweeping vaccine-or-test requirements for large private companies. "Although Congress has indisputably given OSHA the power to regulate occupational dangers, it has not given that agency the power to regulate public health more broadly," the court wrote. In a separate decision, the court ruled 5-4 to allow a Department of Health and Human Services emergency rule requiring vaccines for workers at public and private health-care facilities that participate in Medicare and Medicaid. Citygate Network still strongly recommends that you follow the CDC guidelines for shelters.

Let's Start the Conversation

Every year thousands of people suffer sexual exploitation in the United States. What does sex trafficking look like in America? Who are the most vulnerable? Citygate Network has partnered with The Samaritan Women Institute for Shelter Care to offer a webinar that may deepen your knowledge of risk factors, vulnerabilities, and health concerns that affect trafficking victims. We'll also discuss the tactics of the traffickers that prey on these individuals. Understanding the mindset of the victim and trafficker better equips groups to develop appropriate response protocols for the safest outcome. [More information](#) is available on our website, or you can [register here to participate](#) in *Sex Trafficking in America* on January 25, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. Mountain Time.

DC Forum Registration Opens January 24

As we have already announced, our annual government relations event will again be held virtually this year. The dates are March 15–16. Many Washington offices are still not working with a full staff or taking visitors. Nevertheless, there is a lot to talk about. We'll look at the Biden agenda, rulings, and proposed programs that could impact homeless services providers and ministry organizations. We'll review the Supreme Court's docket to date. We also have an expert to discuss the latest statistics on fentanyl. Several lawmakers will join us live. Our U.S. members can begin to sign up next week for this two-day, Zoom-and-Whova conference. The cost will be \$60 per computer for the two days. You can gather as many staff as you want in your conference room for this one low price. Last year, about half of our member organizations participated. We hope to see you online this year.

Access Valuable Financial Guides

Thanks to our partnership with the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA), you can get a sneak peek at the [2022 digital download editions](#) of the *Church & Nonprofit Tax & Financial Guide*, the *Minister's Tax & Financial Guide*, and 15 related short videos. Remember, as a Citygate Network member, you do not have to pay the \$500 application fee for membership with ECFA, a valued resource and endorsement for thousands of Christian ministries all over North America.

Do You Offer Tax Preparation Services for Your Guests?

Please let Citygate Network Executive Assistant [Alice Gifford](#) know ASAP if you have helped any of your mission clients claim the earned income tax credit and/or child tax credit that we've been telling you about. We're working on a new toolkit for members (and possibly other organizations) and would like to interview some of your guests or former program participants whom you have helped -take advantage of these funds that can provide critical assistance to those living below the poverty level. This will be a toolkit you can use over and over again, and it will allow you to more fully serve those working through your programs. Time is of the essence on this project, so [email Alice right away](#) if you can help us learn about your "success stories" from those who have claimed these tax credits.

Get Organized to Start the New Year

As a Citygate Network member, you are in charge of what information we have and what resources and communications you receive from us. To learn more and customize your profile, [download this document](#) and start the new year off by getting your membership organized the way you want it. If you have any trouble, [reach out to Aly Zadurawicz](#), our member support manager.

Looking Down the Street

- In December, Jeanne Flohr, a former co-leader at the **San Diego Rescue Mission** (San Diego, California), and the association's oldest individual member, [died at the age of 103](#). The International Union of Gospel Missions was less than five years old when Jeanne was born! She and her husband, James, ran the Southern California mission for 22 years, before retiring in 1994.
- The Sierra District has a new member: **Oakdale Rescue Mission** (Oakdale, California) is led by Executive Director Pamela Kelly. [Reach out to give Pamela](#) and her team a warm welcome.
- Congratulations to **New Life Center** (Fargo, North Dakota) for renewing its accreditation with Citygate Network. Hats off to Rob Swiers and his team for a job well done. [Click here to learn more about the highly regarded Citygate Network Accreditation program](#) (formerly known as the Certification program)
- Guy Fieri, the popular host of several Food Network shows, hails from Santa Rosa, California, where he and his family regularly support and volunteer at **Redwood Gospel Mission** (Santa Rosa, California). In a holiday episode of *Guy's Grocery Games*, his nephew, Jules, promised potential winnings to the mission in a family-themed competition. Although Jules did not win, the mission received a donation from the show.
- **Welcome Hall Mission** (Montreal, Quebec) [received 60,000 pounds of potatoes](#) from a donor responding to the U.S. export ban on potatoes. Supporting both the local farmers and those experiencing food shortages, Mac Watson paid for the potatoes and money for the mission to cover the cost of transportation to Montreal. The mission plans to use the spuds in its hot meal program, providing 1,200 meals to the community every day, as well as distributing them through its free grocery stores serving 2,500-plus people a week.
- In celebration of the 40th anniversary of **Christian Shelter** (Salisbury, Maryland), the mission published *Christian Shelter: Serving People in Crisis for 40 Years*, a colorful history book highlighting the shelter's founders, renovation projects, donors, challenges, and triumphs.
- **Mel Trotter Ministries** (Grand Rapids, Michigan) lost another staff member to COVID-19. Lisa Bocker, who was a former mission guest, served as an intake specialist after rededicating her life to Christ, getting sober, and finding both a job and a house. She joyfully poured into guests and shared the love of Christ with them at every opportunity.
- Pastor David Honey, who had served at **Good News Rescue Mission** (Redding, California) since 1998, died from complications of COVID-19 in December. He was the mission's first guest services manager and then became their pastor in 2014, while also serving as a prison chaplain.

TELL US: Do you have news to share with other network members? Send a blurb to [Alice Gifford](#). Include as many details as possible. We'll handle the editing



Pastors Warn Against Conversion Therapy Bill

Bill C-4 went into effect in Canada on January 8 after flying through the Canadian Parliament last month without extensive debate, opposition, committee study, or votes. The [controversial legislation labels heterosexuality and cisgender identity a "myth,"](#) and calls counseling by clergy that promotes sexuality exclusively between a man and a woman "conversion therapy," which could now lead to a five-year jail sentence. Endorsing the bill, the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) defines conversion therapy as "any formal therapeutic attempt to change the sexual orientation of bisexual, gay and lesbian individuals to heterosexual." More than 4,000 North American pastors have already joined in protest, voicing concern that the bill violates freedom of speech and religion. Well-known Pastor John MacArthur (Grace Community Church, Los Angeles, California) leads the protest in the U.S., warning that similar legislation has already been passed in California, New York, New Jersey and Nevada.

Christians Show More Generosity

The *2021 State of the Bible* study conducted by the American Bible Society (ABS) presents research indicating that practicing [Christians show a higher likelihood of donating to charity than non-Christians.](#) Further, those Christians who attend church regularly, have a 75 percent higher tendency to donate than those who do not attend church. "Givers give, whether that's volunteering in the community, helping a stranger, or clicking an app for disaster relief."

The Americans who generously support charitable organizations include churches and other nonprofits and are overwhelmingly practicing Christians. In fact, a correlation exists between how frequently people say they attend church and how much money they donate to charity, according to the study. The *State of the Bible* study drew from the more than 3,300 responses from adults in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.



Concerns Rise for Youth Mental Health

The surgeon general has prioritized the mental health of the nation's youth via a [new Surgeon General's Advisory.](#) Dr. Vivek Murthy calls for a nationwide effort to mitigate the mental health impacts of the pandemic, address longstanding challenges, and prevent future mental health challenges. He outlines actionable steps for young people, their families, caregivers, schools, health professionals, and community organizations, to protect youth mental health. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health challenges ranked as the leading cause of disability and poor life outcomes in young people between ages three and 17. For the decade from 2009 to 2019, the number of high school students who admitted ongoing feelings of sadness or hopelessness rose by 40 percent, affecting more than one in three students. Suicidal behavior also increased alarmingly among high school students during the same

decade preceding COVID-19. Many have expressed increased concern about how the pandemic disruptions in the lives of children and adolescents will affect those statistics going forward.

Consider: You won't want to miss Matthew Stanford's session at the [annual conference this June](#). The CEO of the Hope and Healing Center & Institute is a prominent researcher, speaker, and author focused on the role of faith communities in mental health care.

Consider: Perhaps you can [use this graphic](#) released by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to reach out to youth at your facility or in your community to encourage them to seek help for their mental health challenges and substance use disorder.

High-Quality Employment Deters Former Prisoners from Recidivating

Recidivism among former prisoners is all too common. In fact, most individuals released from state prisons are re-arrested within two years. However, growing evidence—including a January 14 [study out of North Carolina](#)—indicates that one of the most reliable cures for recidivism is a good job. According to the study, individuals who find work after leaving prison are 26 percent less likely than their unemployed counterparts to return to a life of crime. However, while any employment is an important factor to combatting relapse, the quality of the employment is, perhaps, even more critical. The study concludes that landing higher-paying work, especially work with a career path, has a far more positive effect on outcomes than low-paying jobs.

Donations Up, Volunteers Down

According to a recent Gallup poll, 81 percent of Americans say they donated money to charity during 2021, up eight points from last year. That rise occurred across all income groups. However, [the share of Americans who volunteered actually decreased](#) a couple percentage points, dropping from 58 to 56 percent. Volunteering has seen a steady decline since 2013, when it registered 65 percent. Most of the decline in volunteerism comes from households with incomes above \$100,000, with the other levels holding steady. Overall, according to the poll, giving and volunteering both rank below pre-pandemic levels; however, many Citygate Network members gratefully report continued record giving.



Christianity Declining in Canada

Statistics Canada recently released data showing that only [68 percent of Canadians over age 15 now claim any religious affiliation](#). This marks the first time that statistic has dropped below 70 percent in the 35-plus years since tracking began. However, the number of Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Hindus has gone up during the period that Christianity and Catholicism have both sharply declined. Catholicism, Canada's largest denomination, has dwindled from almost 47 percent in 1996 to the current 32 percent, and Canada's United and Anglican churches have dropped into single digit percentages. Reverend Jason Meyers of the Metropolitan United Church in Toronto, Ontario, says, "There will be fewer churches and yet the ones that are able to build belonging across lines of difference—whether that is racial or economic—they're the ones that are going to stay and grow." *Statistics Canada* also noted a

generational gap, finding that 85 percent of Canadians born between 1940 and 1959 claim a religious affiliation compared to only 32 percent of those born between 1980 and 1999.

Fining the Unvaccinated

Quebec Premier Francois Legault revealed [plans to levy a tax on residents who have not received vaccinations](#) and don't have a valid medical exemption. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said that the federal government will support provinces in whatever ways they deem necessary "to stand by the principles and the rules around the Canada Health Act as they move forward." Although Legault did not specify the amount of the proposed tax, he indicated it would be "significant," and he doesn't consider \$50 or \$100 very significant.

Various experts have weighed in with mixed reactions, including concern that the "divisive measure" could end up "punishing and alienating those who may be most in need of public health supports and services."



Does Your Leadership Reflect Your Community?

According to a *BoardSource* report, statistics indicate that about [87 percent of nonprofit CEOs in the U.S. were white](#) in 2019 (down from 90 percent in 2016). Likewise, roughly 78 percent of nonprofit board members were white in 2019 (down from 84 percent in 2016). Since blacks, Latinos, and other people of color make up around 40 percent of the U.S. population, the lack of diversity among nonprofit leaders and their boards impacts their work and influence in their communities. Humans have a tendency to form relationships with others who share similar racial and ethnic backgrounds (known as *racial homophily*). Diversity can expand perspectives to help shape how a nonprofit implements inclusivity.

Consider: In what ways does your team go out of its way to mentor and hire team members and leaders from different racial and ethnic groups, and recruit board members that represent your community populations?

Unequal Representation in Research

The Chronicle of Philanthropy reports on a sobering reality highlighted by the pandemic: [People of color do not routinely participate in medical research studies](#). While black and brown populations have shown a disproportionate risk for severe symptoms and/or death from COVID-19, almost 80 percent of the data used to study how genes influence health comes from white people. In spite of evidence showing how geographical origins can play an important role in a person's risk of disease, its progression, and response to treatment, it hasn't resulted in increased diversity in the pool of subjects participating in clinical studies. Most medical research doesn't specify the need for diverse study participants, and since racial and ethnic groups often mistrust scientific research, they don't readily volunteer to engage in it. This omission impedes progress towards finding appropriate treatment for non-white populations. Additionally, the referral process for physicians recommending patients to participate in studies is often rigorous and time consuming. Consequently, few participants of color enroll in clinical trials, furthering

their underrepresentation in data and a lack of understanding about the health conditions of these minority populations.



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Clean Slate

Most people think of the New Year as an opportunity to “start over” with a clean slate. Whether they resolve to give up swearing, take up exercising, start saving, or implement some other change that will positively affect their lives going forward, hanging up a new calendar seems like a significant turning point.

But Lamentations 3:22-23 indicates that we can begin fresh on a daily basis:

*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.*

When we fail to measure up to a standard we set or lose our momentum or motivation to uphold the resolutions we’ve made, God doesn’t turn His back and walk away in disappointment or disgust. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 13 that love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. As humans, we stumble, we fall short, and we regularly miss the mark, but we don’t have to wait until next New Year’s to try again.

There’s nothing wrong with setting goals or even making New Year’s resolutions, but don’t give up or quit if/when you falter. Thanks to God’s never-ending grace and mercy towards His children, we can get up and try again, whether the calendar reads January 1 or October 12. He meets us, not with a wagging finger, but with open arms, right where we are.

*See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland.*
Isaiah 43:19

Written by Alice Gifford, Citygate Network.

To contribute: If you would like to write a devotional thought for StreetLight, please make it about 200 words, include at least one Bible verse or passage, and submit via [e-mail](#).

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