



# Poverello News

(559) 498-6988 • [www.poverellohouse.org](http://www.poverellohouse.org)



## HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

No matter who you are or where you are, everyone needs a place to call home. Home is a feeling of peace, love, and acceptance. During the holidays, people travel across the country through snow and rain to come home. For people experiencing homelessness, however, home is not welcoming or safe. It is a tent or a blanket on a cold sidewalk. It's a place where fear, hunger, and hopelessness are constant companions. This year, through Poverello House's programs, families and individuals previously experiencing homelessness are home for Christmas. It is the simple things that make a home a home; the ability to cook meals for yourself and your family; a safe place to sleep, take a shower, and be with family. Pamela, a grandmother helping raise her grandchildren, was homeless for over a year, states, "Being home for the holidays means the freedom to cook meals for myself and my grandchildren." For Norma, home is an opportunity to become educated and become financially independent. When asked about what the holidays and home mean to her this year, Norma said, "It will feel good to be able to cook on Christmas. I can finally ask my kids to come over and make food with me. I probably won't have money for gifts, but I am happy to have a roof over my head. I am also happy to have a kitchen, and I thank God and Poverello House." James, who stayed at the Village of Hope, was connected to employment and housing. James stated his feelings about home; "I feel loved, being around people who care, rather than being on the streets alone by myself." Being home, especially during the holidays, is a time to appreciate being together as a family and having the things you need. "I am happy to have a roof over our head for ourselves and our dogs," said Harvey and Rhonda, who were housed under Poverello House's Rapid Rehousing Program. Tomasa, a mother to six boys, lost their housing during the pandemic. Fortunately, they were housed several days ago. Tomasa shared her thoughts about the upcoming holiday season, "Being home for the holidays is a relief, and we are thankful and blessed." Maya Angelou, a famous poet, once said, "The ache for home lives in all of us." This holiday season, Poverello House is grateful that over 300 more people are home for the holidays through our programs and resources this year.



Norma



James



Harvey and Rhonda

# ADVENT AT POVERELLO HOUSE CHURCH

Poverello House has provided a church service for over 30 years. We believe that spiritual care is important to many people we serve. For nearly two years, CEO Zack Darrah has been pastoring this unique church service on the Poverello House campus. Zack has served as a Pastor at several local churches and has earned a Master's degree in Theological Studies from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary. "It has been an absolute humble honor to get to serve as the pastor of Pov Church since joining the organization," said Zack. "The congregation is a beautiful reflection of the Kingdom of God, and each week is extraordinary. I look forward to continuing our legacy of providing spiritual care to those we serve that started in the earliest days of Papa Mike's ministry." Each week during service, there is preaching of the Bible, musical worship, and prayer. The church service is non-denominational and celebrates the Christian church traditions of communion and baptism. The ministry has provided over 600 Bibles to those experiencing homelessness. Another tradition that the Pov Church will celebrate this holiday season is advent. Advent is a time of preparation and celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. This Christian tradition started in the 5th Century and begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. Candles are lit each week, representing a different part of the Biblical Christmas story. Zack shared, "I am excited about the Advent season at Pov Church. Advent was very meaningful for our congregation in the last two years. We look forward to the hope and wonder that Pov Church will bring to so many this Advent season."

If you would like to know more about Pov Church, please contact Zack at [zdarrah@poverellohouse.org](mailto:zdarrah@poverellohouse.org).



*Zack Preaching at Poverello House.*



THE SEASON OF GIVING IS HERE

## Christmas Eve Toy Giveaway

Friday, December 24th, 6:00 am  
Ages 0-17

## Christmas Eve Lunch

Friday, December 24th, 12:00 pm  
Posole

## Christmas Day Lunch

Saturday, December 25th, 12:00 pm  
Tamales

Any questions? Please call 559-498-6988

## DECEMBER WISH LIST

- New and unwrapped Toys, Wrapping Paper, Tape, and Scissors
- Ground Coffee • Packaged Men's Underwear (Large, XL, 2XL)
- Winter Items: Coats, Beanies, Scarves, and Gloves
- Disposable Razors • Toilet Paper
- 33 and 55 Gallon Garbage Bags

### Donations are Accepted

Monday - Friday  
8 am - 5 pm

Saturday - Sunday  
8 am - 1 pm

### 412 F Street, Fresno

Donation lane located on  
G Street between  
Ventura and San Benito

# A HOLIDAY MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



**Zack Darrah,**  
Chief Executive  
Officer

For many of us during the Christmas season, our celebrations will center around some concept of “home.” Several of the most popular songs of the season highlight being home or longing to be home for this special time of year. Bing Crosby’s classic, “I’ll be Home for Christmas,” is about a soldier in World War II longing to be home but only able to be there in his dreams. Nat King Cole’s “The Christmas Song” is about celebrating Christmas at home. In “What Christmas Means to Me,” Stevie Wonder sang about his celebration, mainly being at his home with loved ones. These concepts resonate with most of us. Unfortunately, the truth is for many of those we serve at Poverello House, this Christmas will not happen at home. For those experiencing homelessness, that reminder is never more prominent than during the holiday season. However, we work tirelessly to make sure that those we serve get the chance to have their own home once again.

During my time at Poverello House, there are few things better than getting to see an individual, couple, or family transition from the streets into their very own home! On the front page of this newsletter, you have read about just a selection of those who will be home for Christmas this year. While you may not personally know the people in these stories, you have helped make these stories possible! Being home for Christmas could not happen for so many without your continued generous support of this work daily. May your Christmas be filled with all the magic and joy of the season. May you rejoice alongside us as we celebrate those whose Christmas will not be on the street or in a shelter this year. May you also remember those whose only home this Christmas will be Poverello House.

Merry Christmas,

Zack



## CLIENT BATHROOM RENOVATION



Poverello House provides supportive services for those that access our campus. We provide services such as food, shelter, drug rehabilitation, mail service, transportation, laundry, showers, a library, and mental health programs. An essential resource we provide is public restrooms for those experiencing homelessness. These restrooms are used at an extremely high volume, especially during the pandemic. Heavy use has left the client bathroom facilities in desperate need of a complete renovation. Through the generous support of the community, Poverello House has been able to update and improve the facilities. The renovation began with a total demolition of the current bathrooms. Updates included new walls, fixtures, lighting, paint, flooring, partitions, and an improved ventilation system to circulate air in the bathrooms properly. Chief Operations Officer, Paul Stack, says, “I have wanted to do this project for well over a decade. I believe that providing appropriate bathrooms for our clients brings the dignity, worth, and value we want them to feel when they come here. I can finally say that I am proud of these bathrooms!” We thank the community for making this project possible. This project will benefit and improve the lives of people experiencing homelessness for years to come!



# FALL FESTIVAL FILLED WITH GAMES, FOOD, AND PRIZES FOR VILLAGE OF HOPE AND NAOMI'S HOUSE RESIDENTS.

