



NEWSLETTER



WHAT'S INSIDE

From Darkness to Purpose

Barry's journey of struggle, redemption, and a new beginning through faith and recovery.

CHARITY CLASSIC

- Our annual golf tournament

MIDLANDS GIVES

- Upcoming fundraiser event

THE HOPE CENTER

- Exciting news coming soon



*Transforming lives
through the power of
Christ's love.*

From Barren Soil to New Life

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing, and perfect will.”

- Romans 12:2

Springtime is such a wonderful season of renewal. Every year as the days lengthen and the earth warms, **the beauty of God’s creation “springs” forth.** But not always, and not everywhere. Before my wife and I came to Columbia, we had **poor soil.**

Insufficient nutrients. We would plant, fertilize, water, but the end was always the same — **dead plants,** and another trip to the nursery to buy more. We were told we needed to **remove the old soil and put in new soil.**

Across the page you can read Barry’s story. I have been seeing Barry nearly every day. That smile you see seems to never disappear now. But it has been a long and uneven path *from dark to light.* There had to be some **“soil replacement.”** At some point, we all come to a place where we must admit **we are trapped in the old dirt.** And no amount of self-help is sufficient to change the situation because **we must be transformed deeply, beginning in our hearts. THAT** is our mission at Oliver Gospel — to facilitate as best as we can God’s work in the hearts and then the lives of the people he leads to us. **You are partners with us in that mission, and we thank you.**

Kyle Harding,
Executive Director



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From Darkness to Purpose

Barry's story began in a home where fear overshadowed love. "Our father was physically abusive to my mother and verbally abusive to us kids. Safety was nonexistent for me," he recalls. To escape, he turned to the streets, where he found the acceptance he lacked at home. "It wasn't in a positive way, but it was better than home."

As years passed, drugs and addiction took hold. "I hid it for a long time, but eventually, it caused friction at home. When my relationship fell apart, I ended up homeless." Moving from shelters to the streets, Barry struggled to break free. "Even though drugs were ruining my life, they were the only thing that gave me relief—until they made me feel worse than ever."

When he first came to Oliver Gospel, Barry wasn't sure what to expect. "Somebody told me, 'Go downtown. There's a shelter.' That's how I found this place. I started in the Refresh program and eventually entered recovery." But the journey wasn't linear. "I didn't stay the course. I backslid. I spent the next few years bouncing between shelters, relationships, and the streets."

Then came a turning point. "I was looking for a program to help me get clean. I wanted to leave the city, start fresh somewhere else. But when I asked for advice, someone said, 'Why don't you just come here?' It was like a light flipped on. This is where I was supposed to be."

This time, Barry fully committed. "I got a sponsor. I connected with a church. I did the hard work of recovery. Before, I didn't want to do the things they recommended because it made me uncomfortable. But I decided to do what I had never done before—put my whole heart into recovery and Christ."

One of the biggest blessings was rediscovering his passion for cooking. "I helped in the kitchen, doing dishes, preparing meals. It got me back into the groove of working in a kitchen, where I've spent most of my career." That opportunity led to employment, and today, Barry serves those who walk the same road he once did. "Some of the guys coming in now are people I used to get high with. Now, I'm the one serving them meals."

Looking forward, Barry dreams of owning a fleet of food trucks. "I want to generate wealth, leave something for the next generation, and continue being a blessing. That's what matters to me now."

"I wish I would have had this mindset sooner, but my story's already written. No point in looking back—today is all that matters."





Oliver Gospel Charity Classic



More than just a golf tournament, this annual fundraiser is a powerful opportunity to drive change in the fight against homelessness. Every dollar raised

supports Oliver Gospel's mission to provide shelter, vital resources, and renewed hope for individuals and families in need.

Enjoy **18 holes of golf**, a chance to **win incredible prizes**, a **catered dinner**, and a **raffle featuring exclusive items and experiences**—all while making a meaningful difference in our community. **Scan the QR code** to receive more details as the event approaches!



- Monday, May 19th @ 10:00 AM
- Fort Jackson Golf Club



Midlands Gives

CENTRAL CAROLINA
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

An initiative of the Central Carolina Community Foundation, **Midlands Gives** unites the region as one community, fostering generosity and raising awareness for local nonprofits across 11 Midlands counties.

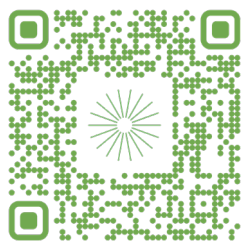
Since its inception in 2014, Midlands Gives has raised over **\$24 million**, empowering hundreds of organizations that make a difference in our communities. On **May 6th**, join us in supporting local nonprofits and making a lasting impact. You can also give year-round to causes that matter most to you.

Since 2018, Midlands Gives has contributed **\$462,492.17** to Oliver Gospel Mission, helping transform lives through compassionate care.

Support Oliver Gospel and Toby's Place for Midlands Gives!



Oliver Gospel



Toby's Place

The Hope Center

We have exciting news! To better serve our community, we are transforming The Hope Shop into something even more impactful—**The Hope Center**.

As a Social Enterprise of Oliver Gospel, our mission has always been to **equip men and women with the skills they need to rebuild their lives through employment**. The Hope Center will enhance this mission by providing an even stronger space for **growth, training, and empowerment**.

In addition, The Hope Center will begin accepting clothing donations during limited hours, helping us better serve our generous donors while addressing the geographical gap from our Thrift Store.

We are grateful for your continued support as we make this transition. Stay tuned for updates on The Hope Center's opening in late Spring 2025 and ways you can contribute to our mission.

Thank you for being part of our journey and making a lasting impact!

