

# "Remember Me"



## Welcome

We welcome you to our first edition of the new Friends of Dismas Newsletter called "Remember Me".

We hope to release new issues on a quarterly basis to share events and meaningful stories ...

## Dismas?

St. Dismas is the name given in legend to the "Good Thief" who died alongside Jesus at the crucifixion.

He asks Jesus to remember him when he comes into the Kingdom and Jesus answers, "Today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23).

The story of this encounter is the core inspiration for our Dismas Fellowships.

## Gordie and the Rhubarb

This is a story of love and loss. It's the Dismas story, but I call it my "rhubarb" story.

It begins with Gord. One evening after serving dinner, I happened to find an empty seat beside Gord. He was eating rhubarb pie and said "Shirley, I love rhubarb pie". I said, "Gord, I love everything rhubarb, but I think my favourite way to eat it, is stewed."



**Gordie**

Gord said "Me too, I love stewed rhubarb, but I haven't had it in ages, I can't remember when I last had some." I didn't really give it much thought at the time, but a day or two before the next Dismas I was stewing some for myself and thought "I should take a little bottle to Gord."

He was happy to receive it and I said to him, "You might find it a bit sour because I don't put a lot of sugar in it. Next Dismas he said, "Shirley that rhubarb was so good! Would you give me the recipe?" I said, "There isn't much of a recipe Gord, but I'll tell you what I do."

One of the most endearing images I have is of Gord straddling the back steps at the Walmer Rd. church, leaning against the wall with a small scrap of paper, writing the recipe as I told it to him. I could not imagine Gord going home and stewing rhubarb.



**Mike D.**

One night Gord didn't show up, and I still had the rhubarb. Mike D. was still there so I asked him if he would like it. He said, "I've never had it stewed, but I'd like to try it."

I gave him the same spiel, "You might find it sour etc." The next Dismas he came in saying, "I loved that rhubarb, please keep it coming and don't change a thing!"

*Story continued on page 2 ...*





## Gordie and the Rhubarb (continued ...)

Not long after that, Gord died. That summer my rhubarb didn't taste very good. I then started bringing it to Mike until the day at Dismas when he threw a plate in anger and smashed on the floor near me. I suffered no harm, but shards of glass landed in my lap. Mike was no longer allowed at Dismas.

A week or two later, after mass, Mike Walsh met me in the lobby. He said Mike D. had asked him to tell me he was very sorry, but could I keep sending him the rhubarb. I remember chuckling and saying, "He just doesn't get it, does he?"

To me, typical Mike, "Sorry I hurt you Shirley, but keep that rhubarb coming!" But Mike was more than that, much more. Then Mike also died suddenly.



***Shirley & Ron Currie***

The next summer I often found myself sitting by my window with a coffee, a small bowl of rhubarb and maybe a biscuit.

The window overlooks the rhubarb patch, and in my imagination, I could see their faces in it.

I tell this story because it is your story too. All of you have given so much to Dismas - your time, your talents, your gifts. That is 'your' rhubarb.

So, I invite all of you to grab a coffee, tea, muffin - whatever gives you comfort. Go out and find 'your' rhubarb patch, and sit there, with 'your' memories of all the beautiful friends we have met, and who have so deeply graced our lives - through Dismas. We are blessed.

Story by Shirley Currie



## Memories of Dismas Christmas Celebrations



**Toronto**



**Hamilton**



**Guelph**









# Care to Check Out a Dismas Fellowship?

If you've never been to a Dismas Fellowship before why not come to one of our Christmas events. We usually have a great meal and a recounting of the Christmas story Dismas-style, and maybe even a rollicking version of the Twelve Days of Christmas. It is a wonderful and happy evening. Please contact us at 877-554-1076



## December 2025



Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
	1	2	3 	4	5 	6
7 	8 	9	10	11	12 	13
14	15	16	17	18 	19 	20
21	22 	23	24	25	26	27





Our vision at Friends of Dismas is focused on building a community of hope by engaging people of faith in creative outreach to those touched by crime, including victims, offenders, families, and communities. Through the years, we have learned that people returning to society after a long period of incarceration have three basic needs: a safe place to live, something meaningful to do, and a supportive community.

Our current ministry initiatives include:



Get Ready For Life



JOURNEY  
HOME  
HOSPICE

Proudly Operated By:



Saint Elizabeth  
Foundation



CCPM Network

### Dismas Fellowships (DFN)

The Fellowships provide a safe and welcoming space where former prisoners and their friends and family can find community and follow our friend Jesus. Dismas groups meet monthly for a meal, a time of eating, singing, and spiritual reflection.

### Get Ready for Life (GRFL)

is a Friends of Dismas program that offers practical assistance to help reintegrate ex-prisoners who have experienced long periods of incarceration. Through a referral system, we strive to identify and provide impactful support, within our capabilities, to those in need.

### Journey Home Hospice (JHH)

is a program of the Saint Elizabeth Foundation, offering specialized 24/7 hospice care for people experiencing homelessness and structural vulnerabilities at the end of life. JHH has recently expanded to include prisoners with terminal diagnoses. Friends of Dismas is developing closer ties with JHH and hopes to assist members of our community to benefit from their care when needed.

### Canadian Catholic Prison Ministry Network (CCPMN)

is a network of Catholic chaplains and volunteers (currently over 80 members) supported by Friends of Dismas. They connect three times a year via Zoom to support each other in visiting those in prison. This program is led by Bishop Gary Gordon, Bishop Ponens to the Interfaith Committee on Chaplaincy of the Correctional Service of Canada for the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.



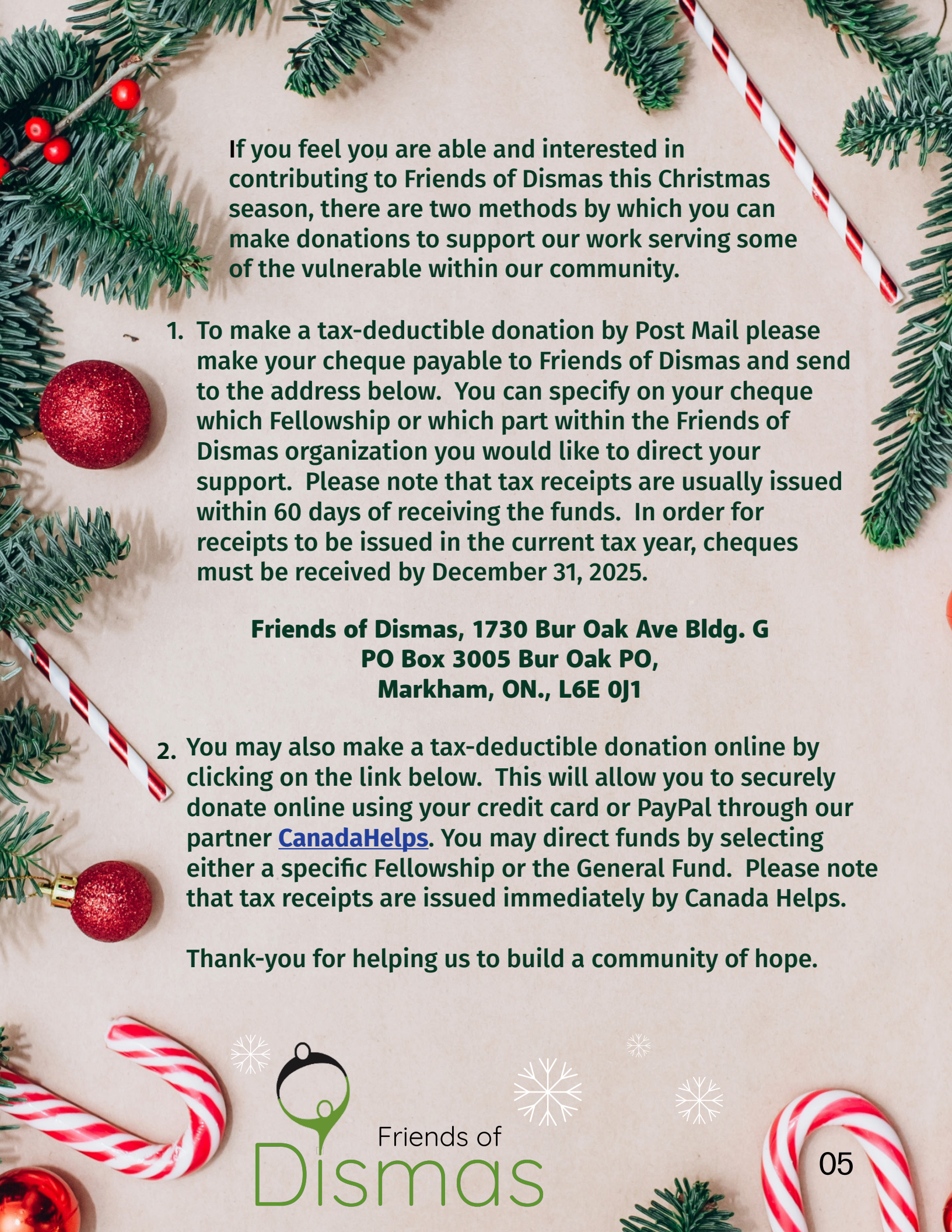
Friends of Dismas

1-877-554-1076

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If you feel you are able and interested in contributing to Friends of Dismas this Christmas season, there are two methods by which you can make donations to support our work serving some of the vulnerable within our community.

1. To make a tax-deductible donation by Post Mail please make your cheque payable to Friends of Dismas and send to the address below. You can specify on your cheque which Fellowship or which part within the Friends of Dismas organization you would like to direct your support. Please note that tax receipts are usually issued within 60 days of receiving the funds. In order for receipts to be issued in the current tax year, cheques must be received by December 31, 2025.

**Friends of Dismas, 1730 Bur Oak Ave Bldg. G  
PO Box 3005 Bur Oak PO,  
Markham, ON., L6E 0J1**

2. You may also make a tax-deductible donation online by clicking on the link below. This will allow you to securely donate online using your credit card or PayPal through our partner [CanadaHelps](#). You may direct funds by selecting either a specific Fellowship or the General Fund. Please note that tax receipts are issued immediately by Canada Helps.

Thank-you for helping us to build a community of hope.