

December 15, 2015

*“Begin with what is necessary, then do the possible,
and pretty soon you will find yourself doing the impossible.”
St. Francis of Assisi*

Dear Friends:

*May the grace and peace of God be with you all during this Christmas season. The scripture message of Christmas is simple **and** complicated: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only Begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14) We continue to behold God’s glory in the mystery of the unfolding ministry known as Jacob’s Ladder Community Development Corporation.*

*Jacob’s Ladder incorporated in 2004 with the State of Tennessee and immediately began work in the Belt Line area of Memphis with the simple call of God to work together with the community to do what was **NECESSARY** - Improve housing, eliminate blight and build relationships of healing, by un-peeling layers of anger, frustration, poverty and crime in the Belt Line. From small beginnings, this ministry was birthed in the hearts of co-founders Bill and Lana Marler, whose vision was quickly shared and supported by Rev. Ken Burnette and eventually, a host of others.*

*Today, Jacob’s Ladder has over 50 different groups working with us to do the **POSSIBLE**. Together, we have re-built 20 previously vacant houses, led in 27 smaller repair projects (including critical home repair) and demolished approximately 30 unsafe and vacant structures. Moreover, the University District, Inc. (U of Mphs.) partnered with us in 2015 to create a program to stop and reverse blight that would require accountability from all problem property owners. This partnership has helped birth a growth business so that Jacob’s Ladder is now able to provide steady neighborhood employment to maintain 70+ previously eyesore lots.*

*We are at the edge of 2016 and according to Thomas Merton, “The Advent Mystery is the beginning of the end of all in us that is not yet Christ.” God’s dream for the Belt Line has yet to be revealed...The Belt Line Community Resource Center is 95% complete, and when operational, will house GED and Job Readiness Programs which will accelerate the creation of jobs and wealth for our community. **DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE** has always been the forte of God and it is still a seemingly complicated goal to be attained, but we press on, more hopeful than ever that His abundant mercy and grace is moving us in the direction of the Light of God as revealed in His Son, Jesus Christ, Who came to re-mediate the blight of sin and reconcile the world unto Himself.*

*All Glory to His Name,
Rev. William D. Marler
Executive Director*