



BROTHER'S  
*Keeper*  
NEWSLETTER

WINTER  
2021

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**W**e have all sung a verse or two of the Christmas carol, "Good King Wenceslas" without knowing the story it tells or the Christian values it teaches. It is a true story of Saint Wenceslas I, Duke of Bohemia (c. 907-935 AD) which is the region around Prague in the Czech Republic. Wenceslas didn't come from a Christian family; his grandfather had converted to Christianity and his mother was the daughter of a pagan tribal chief.

When Wenceslas was 13 his father died, and his mother tried to turn him away from Christ. His father's death created a vacuum of power in Bohemia, but once the dust had settled the people decided they wanted Wenceslas to be their ruler. His mother ruled as regent until young Wenceslas reached the age of 18 at which time Wenceslas gained the throne. He had his mother exiled and sought to reign over his people with mercy and justice as a Christian monarch. To avoid disputes with his younger brother Boleslaus, the country was split in two, and half was given to the younger brother. But Boleslaus was not satisfied with half the territory, and in September 935 he plotted with a group of noblemen and killed Wenceslas.

Wenceslas was regarded as a martyr and saint soon after his death. He was best known for his acts of kindness - one of which was immortalized in the carol we sing at Christmas. An early biographer wrote of his legendary deeds: "Rising every night from his noble bed, with bare feet and only one chamberlain, he went around to God's churches and gave alms generously to widows, orphans, those in prison and afflicted by every difficulty."

Almost a thousand years after Wenceslas lived, a 19th-century Englishman, John Mason Neale, wrote the now-famous song. "Good King Wenceslas" is a Christmas carol that tells the story of a king's journey on a cold and snowy night. Wenceslas was enjoying the Feast of Stephen, which is on December 26, the second day of Christmas. He looked out over his land in the moonlight and noticed a poor man gathering firewood

**Good King Wenceslas**

*Good King Wenceslas looked out, on the feast of Stephen; when the snow lay round about, deep and crisp and even. Brightly shone the moon that night, though the frost was cruel; when a poor man came in sight, gathering winter fuel.*

*"Hither page, and stand by me, if thou knows it telling; yonder peasant, who is he? Where and what his dwelling?" "Sire, he lives a good league hence, underneath the mountain; right against the forest fence by Saint Agnes fountain."*

*"Bring me flesh and bring me wine, bring me pine logs hither. Thou and I will see him dine, when we bear the thither." Page and monarch, forth they went, forth they went together; through the rude wind's wild lament and the bitter weather.*

*"Sire, the night is darker now, and the wind blows stronger; fails my heart, I know not how, I can go no longer." "Mark my footsteps my good page, tread thou in them boldly; thou shalt find the winter's rage freeze thy blood less coldly."*

*In his master's step he trod, where the snow lay dented; heat was in the very sod, which the saint had printed. Therefore, Christian men, be sure, wealth or rank possessing; ye who now will bless the poor shall yourselves find blessing.*

for his home. He asked a page if he knew who the man was and where he lived. The page responded that the man lived far away at the base of a mountain in the distance. Wenceslas wanted to share the warmth of home and the food of the holiday with this man. He ordered the servants of his household to fetch food and firewood, so he could take them to the poor man's home. Thus began the King's journey of goodwill through the wintry night with one of his servants. Off they went together, carrying a heavy load and trudging through heavy snowfall and cold wind.

The page grew weary during the journey through the snow and said to the King, "Sire, I cannot go any further." The King told his page to simply follow in his footsteps in the snow. Legend says that as the page walked in the King's footsteps, he was pleasantly warmed. King Wenceslas and his page arrived at the poor man's home with plenty of firewood and a wonderful dinner that they all shared together.

Christmas is about the birth of Christ, and it is unusual for a Christmas carol not to refer to the Nativity. Jesus lived his life blessing, teaching, and serving others and died as a sacrifice for us. The ending of the carol, "Therefore, Christian men, be sure, wealth or rank possessing, ye who now will bless the poor, shall yourselves find blessing" is a call for all of us to bless those less fortunate than ourselves.

As the Christmas season is upon us and as this year comes to a close, we should remember the example that Wenceslas set for us and do likewise. Everyone gives differently. Some give time and service, some give prayer, and some give from their resources. In whatever manner you choose to give, thank you for following God's call to do so.



Cecile Huddleston

# 2021 IN REVIEW

We have had another year full of adversity and challenges. However, our participants at Brother's Keeper have continued to adapt, thrive, and have fun in spite of these circumstances. We could not be more proud of the hard work and effort they put forth every day, each displaying a smile on their face.



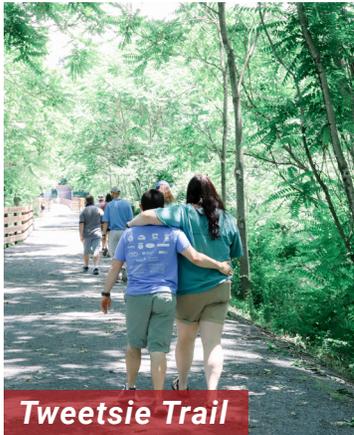
Brother's Keeper



Paradise Acres



Doe River Gorge



Tweetsie Trail



Second Harvest Food Bank

## Engage With Us

We are thankful to be in our sixth year and our Board of Directors continues to be fully committed to pursuing the vision, mission, and long-range plans of Brother's Keeper. Since the inception of BK, our plan has been to build a campus that includes residential facilities as well as enterprise facilities, and much more. That plan and vision remain the same today. We are so grateful to our supporters who faithfully pray and support this mission. You help us meet the needs of this community of people that face an uncertain future without opportunities for continued education and personal growth. *Your year-end gift to Brother's Keeper* can make a lasting impact in the lives of those attending Brother's Keeper and offer them hope for a promising future.

Please consider investing in our mission; we appreciate you partnering with us!



### Become A Donor

Consider becoming a Friend of Brother's Keeper and sign up to become a regular monthly donor.



### Gifting

Donate Appreciable Assets, Gifts of Stock, Gifts In-Kind, or include Brother's Keeper in your Estate Planning.



### Gift Matching

See if your employer has a Matching Gift Plan in which they will match employee's contributions to charitable organizations.

Please contact us at [info@BrothersKeeperTN.org](mailto:info@BrothersKeeperTN.org) if you would like to discuss any of the above contribution opportunities.

To donate by credit card or PayPal, please visit our website at [www.BrothersKeeperTN.org/donate](http://www.BrothersKeeperTN.org/donate).

#### Or mail donations to:

Brother's Keeper  
P.O. Box 4101  
Johnson City, TN 37602

Merry Christmas  
from our  to yours!

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