

MEET JOHN SIMPSON

NEW PRESIDENT & CEO



SPECIAL EDITION

February 2026

STORIES OF HOPE



Dr. Alan Carson, Sr.
KGM Board Chairman

As we step into a new year, one truth is abundantly clear: **God is at work in and through Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries.** The past year brought seasons of transition and change, yet through it all, the evidence of God's leading has been unmistakable. He has prepared this ministry, anointed its work, and called each staff member and volunteer to serve with purpose in this time and place.

As Pastor John Simpson begins his journey as President and Chief Executive Officer, we do so with great confidence and peace. Scripture reminds us that **"He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it,"** and we see that promise lived out in Pastor John's life. The **"good"** began when John gave his heart to Christ as a young person, and the **"work"** has been shaped and refined over the years. Through education, ministry experience, and faithful service within our community, God has been preparing him to lead within the walls of this ministry.

As a board member over the years, I have had the privilege of watching Pastor John

serve faithfully for more than a decade. **He consistently leads with compassion, conviction, and a deep respect for the dignity of every guest we serve.** While meeting basic needs such as food and shelter is essential, there is something truly sacred about being able to see first hand the healing from trauma and the life-changing decisions that lead to wholeness in Christ. **Pastor John has been instrumental in fostering that environment,** and he will continue to champion this vision as he leads.

We look forward with expectation to the year ahead and all God has in store for KGM. Thank you for walking alongside us. Would you consider how God may be asking you to partner with us in the new year? Your time, talent, and treasure are impactful to the people we serve. **Thank you for standing with us in prayer as we serve this community in the name of Jesus Christ.**

**Philippians 1:6
(NKJV)**
**"being confident of this
very thing, that He who
has begun a good work in
you will complete it until
the day of Jesus Christ;"**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Carson, Sr." followed by a stylized flourish.

"It is an honor to be a small part of the work God is doing in the life of each person who walks through our doors."

— John —

MEET JOHN

GETTING TO KNOW OUR NEW PRESIDENT & CEO

2025 was full of changes for KGM, one of those changes being when Pastor Michael L. Brown announced his transition out of the President & CEO position here at **KGM**. For some organizations, this can be a hard transition and full of unknowns, but God provided every step of the way and laid a path for a smooth succession. For 11 years, **John Simpson** has been at KGM in several different roles, influencing guests and building relationships. **KGM is thrilled to start 2026 by introducing John Simpson as KGM's new President & CEO!** As John steps into this leadership role, we want to take this time to give him the opportunity to share a little bit about himself and to cast his vision for his plans as the President & CEO.

Here's what he shared:

LOOKING BACK, WHAT MOMENTS MOST SHAPED HOW YOU LEAD TODAY?

"My leadership has been shaped by three primary influences. First, being intentionally mentored by faithful leaders who modeled humility, courage, and integrity. Watching how they navigated pressure, conflict, and calling taught me lessons I could never learn from a book alone. Those relationships grounded me and reminded me that leadership is as much about character as it is competence.



"For more than 92 years, this ministry has stood as a faithful presence in our city—serving, sheltering, and restoring hope for anyone in need. That legacy is not behind us; it is the foundation on which we build the future."

-Pastor John Simpson



Second, I've spent years studying authentic leadership—learning not just how to lead effectively, but how to lead faithfully, with a deep awareness of responsibility and stewardship.

Finally, moments of crisis have shaped me deeply. Seasons of challenge and uncertainty stripped away self-reliance and cultivated humility, dependence on the Lord, and clarity of purpose. Those moments stretched my faith and strengthened my resolve to lead with grace and conviction."

WHAT VALUES ARE NON-NEGOTIABLE FOR YOU AS A LEADER?

"At the core, my leadership is grounded in mercy, empowerment, and integrity. **I strive to extend to others the same mercy God has shown me**, recognizing that none of us leads or serves perfectly and that growth often happens through grace. I believe strongly in empowering people to lead from their God-given strengths and trusting them to do what they do best, creating space for others to flourish. Integrity is essential. For me, integrity means alignment—where internal convictions and external character match. **Leadership loses credibility when words and actions don't align**, and I am committed to leading with transparency, consistency, and accountability."

WHEN DID KGM MOVE FROM 'IMPORTANT' TO 'PERSONAL' FOR YOU?

"I never anticipated working at KGM, this journey really has been orchestrated by the Lord. While providing food and shelter is essential and lifesaving, **my deepest passion lies in relational discipleship**. I love walking alongside people as they discover their true identity in Christ and begin to lean into who God created them to be, not defined by their past or present circumstances. **KGM became personal when I saw transformation happening not just in situations, but in hearts**. It is an honor to be a small part of the work God is doing in the life of each person who walks through our doors."

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE BEYOND NUMBERS AND PROGRAMS?

"True success is heart transformation. While programs, outcomes, and metrics matter, lasting change flows from the inside out—lives renewed by Christ, new behaviors emerging from transformed hearts, and souls changed for eternity. **This kind of success impacts families, communities, and future generations.**

That presents two challenges. **First, meaningful transformation takes time.** While our culture often demands instant results, we have learned that real, lasting change unfolds over seasons and cannot be rushed. **Second, this kind of transformation is difficult to quantify.** Yet this is the work we are called to do, and it is why we remain committed to walking patiently and faithfully with those we serve—trusting God with the results and grateful for the partners who come alongside us in this mission."

YOU PROVIDED THESE LIFE CHANGING SERVICES IN DECEMBER 2025



7,282
Nights of Stay



13,425
Meals Served



17
Long Term
Program Guests



202
Guests Served
at KDC

WHAT HAVE YOUR SPOUSE AND CHILDREN TAUGHT YOU ABOUT HUMILITY OR PATIENCE?

"My family has loved me at my worst and stood with me through seasons of growth and challenge. They have modeled humility, patience, grace, and perseverance in ways that continually shape my heart. Experiencing that kind of love firsthand makes it easier—and more genuine—to extend grace to others. **They remind me daily that leadership begins at home and that faithfulness in small moments matters deeply.**"

HOW DO YOU PROTECT TIME FOR THE PEOPLE WHO MATTER MOST?

"I'm learning to build healthy guardrails around my time and energy. That means prioritizing rest, spiritual renewal, and being fully present with the people God has entrusted to me. I've learned that I cannot serve my family—or lead in ministry—out of an empty cup. **When I am filled spiritually and relationally, I am better equipped to lead with wisdom, clarity, and compassion.**"

We're grateful for John's heart for Christ-centered transformation, thankful for all that he has already done here at KGM, and excited to see how God will use John's leadership to advance KGM's mission. **Please join us in welcoming John to his new role at KGM!**



NEW LIFE... NEW HOPE...

Cultivating a Brighter Tomorrow

KGM entered a new season in more than one area of its multi-faceted ministry in 2025, opening up the possibility for uncertainty. But as some new procedures have been implemented, KGM has seen a rise in program interest and guests taking the steps to change their circumstances. When facing homelessness, it can be easy to find yourself in a rut and not know how to get out or where to start, and that, on top of other stresses, is overwhelming. At **Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries**, we encourage guests to join our programs, like **our one year regeneration program**, which provides one-on-one support and tools to help students achieve their future goals and get back on their feet.

After the new guidelines were put into effect in our emergency shelters, we saw many guests take the announcement as motivation to make changes and take the next steps. **"I saw 25 applications come in, which never happens,"** said Katrina, Director

of Programming. At the start of the January quarter, **"10 guests entered the program, the largest intake class the program has seen in a long time,"** say Katrina. The increase in program guests not only helps guests as individuals, but program staff have seen it strengthen the community as guests encourage and mentor one another throughout the program, which is crucial to success.

The NL|NH program is an important part of what we do here at KGM, empowering guests and changing lives. And **YOU**, our donors and volunteers, are essential to making programming possible. We are so grateful for your partnership in supporting our guests.

Do you want to help those in the NL|NH program in a practical way? Read below on how you can get connected and help our guests cultivate a brighter tomorrow.

EMPOWER A GUEST WITH A WELCOME BASKET

Help a guest start the NL|NH program off right by providing the essentials for success.

Scan the QR code below to view our registry.



LOCATIONS:

Go to our website to download the flyer www.kzoogospel.org/events-page
(to be a part of the fundraiser show the flyer at purchase or enter the code for mobile orders)

20%
OF YOUR PURCHASE
WILL BE DONATED
TO KGM



For the full version of this article, request a **FREE** copy of **"Lessons for Building Your Legacy Game Plan"** by contacting **Laura DeMerell at 269-345-2974 ext. 218** or ldemerell@kzoogospel.org - Visit kzoogospel.legacywill.org to bless your family with an up-to-date will.



KGM
269.345.2974
info@kzoogospel.org
448 N. Burdick St. Kalamazoo

KDC
269.344.7333
info@deaconsconference.org
1010 N. Westnedge Kalamazoo



CITYGATE™
NETWORK

Help and hope found here

MISSION MEMBER
CERTIFIED EXCELLENCE