

## **Tim's Story, Spring 2016**

"I was hungry, dirty and not used to a helping hand. In my life I've always been the one who helped the homeless, but was now homeless myself. I was really depressed and had the attitude that I wasn't homeless, but I was."

That was Tim Ballinger reflecting on what he was feeling when he got to Bethlehem Inn. Tim has been, at various times, an executive chef and, for fourteen years, a forest ranger in California.



When his stint as a ranger ended, Tim came to Oregon and looked for work. Between jobs in late summer, Tim got into his first and only scrape with the law...a misdemeanor offense that put him in jail for four days. Released, he was broke, jobless and now homeless. Then his lawyer told him about Bethlehem Inn. While there, he found day labor work in Prineville. One day he had a heart attack on the job and was rushed to the hospital. His first call was to the staff at Bethlehem Inn, people he trusted and could count on. They checked on him every day and when he was released, arranged transportation back to the Inn.

Tim credits Inn staff with getting him back on track with structure, rules, chores and goals. He will need heart surgery, but for now he's staying with a friend, applying for jobs. In an email to the Inn staff as he prepared to leave, he expressed his heartfelt thanks for "...your dedication and concern for myself and the homeless population in Central Oregon..."