

June 2024

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to take care of you and not to abandon you, plans to give you hope and a future."
- Jeremiah 29:11

A Message from the President

Dear Families, Friends, and Supporters,

We celebrate and give thanks when guests leave to move forward with their lives and we then welcome new guests who will work towards finding a dwelling that they can call home and likewise move forward with their lives. In the last month we have celebrated several guests moving forward, and we have welcomed more guests to the St Luke's Guesthouse. Each time this happens we are blessed: Blessed by guests leaving and guests arriving.

Building relationships with local individuals and organizations is central to our mission and we have been blessed by these relationships. Thank you, Trinity



Catholic Academy National Junior Honor Society, and Colleen Casey, their advisor, for 20-gallon storage bins that guests use to store their belongings. Thank you to the children of Old Sturbridge Village

Academy, and their advisor Dan Anderson, for 16 Blessing Bags.

Thank you to Dexter Russell and Spectrum Health for pillows and bath towels for the Guesthouse.

We are also blessed to receive donations from Southbridge Women's Group and a supporter who saw our Facebook posts and dropped by the Guesthouse with a check. Thank you to all who have made donations so far this year – you make St Luke's Guesthouse mission of providing shelter with the vision of self-sufficiency possible.



We are blessed to have our dedicated staff and maintenance volunteers, including Adam (right) and Arcadia (left), of Tradewinds, to create an environment that supports our

guests in becoming self-sufficient.

Members of the community who lend their time, energy and dedication as board members are also a blessing.

*Tamsin Lucey
President of the Board of Directors
Friends of St Luke's Inc.*

Blessing Bags

On May 15, 2024, I had the pleasure of meeting with Dan Anderson, David Burriss and several 7th and 8th graders at Old Sturbridge Village Academy. These students put together 16 "Blessing Bags" after learning about St. Luke's Guesthouse and its work with the homeless. They presented me with the bags after I shared some information about the beginnings of St. Luke's Guesthouse and the current programs it provides. These bags will be given to those living in cars, tents or on the streets.

Tricia Gay, Volunteer Coordinator

June: Virtual Car Wash

The Friends of St. Luke's have been holding a "virtual" car wash during the month of June. This fundraiser will enable us to continue the wonderful work that we are doing at St. Luke's Guesthouse. Since the car wash is



"virtual," donors do not get a clean car; however, they give as if they were. Donations can continue to be made via the website, our Facebook page, personal or business check, our online giving [Click Here](#) or this QR code. We

thank you in advance for your generous support.

Tricia Gay, Volunteer Coordinator



Lizzy's Story: Part 2

There is a happy update on Lizzy (not her real name) and her young child. They came to St. Luke's in December of 2023. Although she got laid off during her time with us, Lizzy was productive in seeking sustainable housing. In May she moved into an apartment in Connecticut. She had applied to Connecticut Housing before coming to us. Lizzy made progress with her finances and contributed to her savings. She continues to take high school courses online and to be motivated by wanting to support herself.

Sam's Story

Sam (not his real name) came to St. Luke's in December of 2023. He had a few difficult years involving a divorce, unemployment, and moving back to Massachusetts from another state. While he was initially working when he came to St. Luke's, he was laid off within a month. He sought employment for several months. He was not eligible for any state assistance. Sam utilized local resources for food and clothing. He often helped around the Guesthouse. In March Sam began working with a landscaping company. Within three weeks he found a room to rent close to his job. He was able to put money down from savings and his paychecks. Sam moved from the Guesthouse in May 2024.

A Reflection by a Board Member



There was a time in my own life when I was given the hope, challenge, and guidance that we offer to the guests at St. Luke's. I was surprised by grace—indeed, this was perhaps the true gift from strangers at the time. I felt that

people saw a future for me that I had lost sight of. I'm not sure what paths I would have found otherwise.

I continue to be surprised by grace in a myriad of ways, and I think that perhaps this surprise is the gift we offer each other: Ordinary people, on ordinary days, pointing out possibilities that we might not see on our own. This is why we promise to *walk with* our guests, rather than *do for* them. This is why we use fundraising as an occasion for advocacy and education. This is why crisis intervention is the starting point, not the purpose, of our programs.

The Guesthouse began with a prayer and a dream. I hope that I can continue to pray and dream with this remarkable group of people--guests, staff, board members, colleagues, citizens—who have opened their hearts to God's surprising grace.

The Rev. Judith Lee

A View from the Staff

We at St. Luke's Guesthouse continue to make changes. Rooms are being supplied with more durable window treatments. Staff have been assisting guests to organize their personal items using the storage bins, bedding, and towels that have been donated by local groups. Erika Ortiz, House Manager, has worked closely with board members to organize the office space downstairs. This will streamline our admissions procedures and administration so that our guests can focus more clearly on their goal of self-sufficiency.

Mary Jo Mason, Case Manager

News from the Guesthouse

- For the months of March, April and May we provided 1,033 nights of shelter and case management for 17 men, women and children ages 11 months to 64 years.
- At the beginning of June we had 10 guests and are near full capacity.
- Over the 3 months, 5 families found other housing and left the Guesthouse.
- As of the beginning of June, two families hoped to be moving into affordable housing.

Finding Hope/Preventing Eviction

Many families are struggling financially, behind on their rent and at risk of losing their homes. Finding HOPE/ Preventing Eviction is an outreach program of Friends of St. Luke's Inc. that provides the support necessary to prevent an individual or a family from being evicted. **We currently have openings for the Finding HOPE program.** If you or someone you know is behind on their rent or bills call us at **774-230-6416** to see if you might qualify to join the program.

What Is St. Luke's Guesthouse?

Founded in 2017, St. Luke's is the only homeless shelter serving single men, women, and families in the fifteen towns of southern Worcester County. St. Luke's receives no government funding and operates thanks to the generosity of local donors, churches, and grants from local businesses and organizations.

Hope is like a path in the countryside.

Originally, there is nothing —

*but as people walk this way again and again,
a path appears. -Lu Xun*



St. Luke's Guesthouse, 141 Main Street, Southbridge, MA 01550 (774) 230-6416

Website: <https://www.friendsofstlukes.org/> Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/StLukesGuesthouse/>

