

Life and Times

Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church

367 Route 9, Waretown, NJ



August, 2017

From the Rector

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Have you noticed the progress made on **The Good Samaritan House** over the last few months? I wanted to let you know how that work is getting done. As most of you know, we had to shut down our men's group home in 2015, as the building needed serious renovations. With some delays, it is exciting to see this project now moving along at a brisk pace!

What caused much of the current enthusiasm for getting our renovations completed was a sad moment in the life of our community; the Memorial Service held to honor our dearly loved friend, Andy Werkoven. During that service, every speaker mentioned Andy's passion for the ministry of the Good Samaritan House. This led Andy's friends, many of them from our Twelve Step Groups that meet in the parish hall most nights of the week, to start working together to get this project done. In honor of Andy, folks are donating funds, their carpentry skills, and preparing lunches for the workers, which has resulted in the quick progress we have recently seen.

Our contractor, Ash Aziz, is present when volunteer crews work on the House. If you have construction skills and would like to volunteer, please call the office, and Nancy will assist you in contacting Ash.

I have written, and Ash has delivered, a number of donation letters to various vendors, requesting building materials. Andy's son, Andy Werkoven Jr., has also sent out some requests for donations. The trailer in our parking lot is where these donations have been stored.

As of now, the materials and labor put into the renovation of the Good Samaritan House is easily over \$75,000. To date, we have used about \$700 from the treasury of St. Stephen's. The rest has all come from donations, including Ash generously donating his time as contractor.

Why hasn't the parish paid for more of this project? We simply don't have the funds. Our budget is already stretched thin, and the small amount set aside for the Good Samaritan House needs to be kept there for regular maintenance. So, to be clear, over \$74,000 used on this

project has come from members of our community that we don't necessarily see on Sunday mornings!


This particular ministry is dear to my heart. I was homeless off and on for a few years as a teenager. From 1999 to 2002, I was the supervisor of two shelters; a family shelter in Ventura, California, and a large men's shelter in Charlotte, North Carolina. As a result of my personal experience, I consider the Good Sam House to be one of the most important ministries of St. Stephen's.

For those not familiar with the ministry of The Good Samaritan House, here is a brief summary: We refer to our program as a "working" program. To qualify to live in the Good Sam House, our applicants must be employable immediately. This means we normally do not admit any applicants who have physical or mental limitations. We expect them to be employed as soon as possible. Since we provide all their basic needs, they can save all their earnings, and leave us, usually within 90 days, with enough money to get their own place and get on with their lives. While they are here, we hold weekly house meetings and individual counseling sessions. The current Board of Advisors are Joe Leddy, Ash Aziz and the Rector.

The Good Samaritan House is the only existing emergency shelter in Ocean County. We owe our thanks to Ash and his construction crew, as well as all the Twelve Step groups, and other organizations and businesses who have generously donated building supplies and funds. With their help, and your help, we will continue to offer this important ministry to local men for many years to come.

We estimate that we will need an additional \$40,000 to complete this renovation project. If this is a project for which you want to be a part through a monetary donation, this is the time to do it! Simply make your checks out to "St. Stephen's" and write "Good Sam House" in the memo section. Let's get this project completed before the cold weather sets in this Fall!

In the Love of Christ,


Fr. Terry