

June 2025

"The goal is for all to become one heart and mind—just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, so they might be one heart and mind with us." [John 17:20-21]

A Message from the President

Our guests come from different backgrounds at different stages of their lives, but they share a common story: A story of lost dreams. Like most of us, they dreamed of a stable home, rewarding work, and life-giving relationships. Like most of us, they never imagined that they would be alone and unsheltered. The staff guides them through this uncharted land of lost dreams. Not only do they gain the skills to build a new life, holding themselves accountable for what they may have ignored or taken for granted, but they also learn to dream again.

This year's Sleep Out (November 7th) and Week of Solidarity (November 1st-8th) are designed to remind us of the community we share – where shelter, stability, and life-giving relationships are possible. By gathering friends and family to sleep outside for a night, we will glimpse the loss and the hope that bring people to the Guesthouse. By taking part in the Week of Solidarity— learning, advocating, collecting donations and gathering for fundraising events--we will help ensure that this dream comes true for everyone.

Please begin planning now for how you can join us with the courage to dream.

The Rev. Judith Lee
President, Board of Directors

Thank You



Thank you to Rapscaillon HOPS Foundation for their generous donation of \$1000. For St. Luke's Guesthouse.

Farewell & Thank you to Mary Jo Mason

Our Case Manager, Mary Jo Mason, has resigned as of May 31st. Mary Jo began working at the Guesthouse in 2022, and she has welcomed, guided, and encouraged countless guests in these three years. She has also written the stories and "view from the staff" for this newsletter for the past year. She has decided that it is time to take some time with her husband and to see what new paths open before her. We are very grateful for all she has done, and we wish her every blessing on her new journey.

Please contact The Rev. Judith Lee at stlukesguesthousejudith@gmail.com if you would like to learn more about this position that is now open.



2025 Week of Solidarity: November 1-8
Sleep Out for Homelessness: November 7th-8th



Join us in solidarity to support St. Luke's Guesthouse by participating in the Sleep Out for Homelessness on November 7th-8th, 2025.

How does it work?

Step 1: Plan a Sleep Out Event on Friday November 7th to 8th in your backyard, campground, organization or other safe space. Or plan to join the Sleep Out at Bethlehem Lutheran Church (345 Main St., Sturbridge, MA 01566).

Step 2: Register your Sleep Out with the Friends of St. Luke's using the registration link on our website:
<https://www.friendsofstlukes.org/2025-sleep-out-for-homelessness/>

Step 3: Donate a monetary gift to the Friends of St. Luke's by mailing a check to **141 Main Street, Southbridge, MA 01550** or use the donation QR code below. Please indicate Sleep Out on the memo line, or use the dropdown menu.

Step 4: Learn more about homelessness by participating in the Week of Solidarity on November 1st-8th. Events will be posted on our website in October.

Step 5: Share your experience with friends and family. Unable to sleep out? No worries - support our organization by making a donation and participating in the Week of Solidarity events through the website or Facebook page!



If you have any questions, please contact Melany Gronska at stlukesguesthouse@gmail.com.

Volunteers & Donations

We have recently received donations from multiple sources. Dudley Congregational Church allowed us to

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

speak to the congregation and provide information about St. Luke's, and in turn they donated an abundance of supplies along with a monetary donation. We are so grateful.



Addison Oxman presents the donations she collected for St. Luke's Guesthouse through her Eagle Scout Project.

Eagle Scout candidate Addison Oxman took on a project to benefit St. Luke's Guesthouse. She led a well-organized drive collecting a large number of items, by setting up outside of Stop and Shop, giving lists to shoppers, identifying the items within the store and then bringing them all to the Guesthouse. She and her team did a great job to support our mission and we are so thankful.

We have been chosen by both Big Y and Stop and Shop to be on their list of nonprofits who will benefit from shopping bag purchases made during the month we are highlighted. We will be posting those months on social media, so stay tuned, and please consider supporting us.

Volunteer recruitment has been slow. We could use some volunteers to help answer the phones or to help in grant writing. If interested, please reach out to Tricia Gay at stlukesguesthousetricia@gmail.com. Thank you.

Tricia Gay, *Volunteer Coordinator*

News from the Guesthouse

For the months of March, April, and May we provided 1,028 nights of shelter and case management for men, women and children, ages 2 to 70 years. 7 families moved into housing. As of June 7th, we have 10 guests with 3 waiting to move in.

In addition to caring for our guests, our House Manager helped 84 "Seekers," providing resources to people on the phone or in person, who did not come into the Guesthouse. 25 email inquiries for shelter were answered.

Polly's Story

Polly (not her real name) came to St. Luke's Guesthouse in March of 2025. She had lost her apartment after losing her job and could no longer afford her rent. Before coming to St. Luke's she was staying in her car. Polly's work experience is IT administration. While an initial job didn't work out, she continued to seek employment and worked with MassHire to find work in her field.

Polly also acknowledged a drinking problem and attended AA meetings regularly while she filled out numerous housing applications. In May, she moved into a woman's sober house in Worcester. She said she was grateful for the support and guidance of the staff at the Guesthouse. She plans to continue to look for work in Worcester, adjust her budget, and save for her own apartment.

Mary Jo Mason, *Case Manager*

A View from the Staff

St. Luke's Guesthouse welcomed 5 guests in March, and then 5 more arrived in May. For a few weeks there was a diverse group of guests. We had several older women who were looking for work as well as housing. We had a young single mother and her child, 2 younger women, and a couple. All our first-floor rooms housed single men working hard to pay off debt, organize RMV issues and save money. The local Amazon warehouse in Charlton has offered job opportunities for several of our guests.

At the same time, 2 guests left because we could no longer provide services for them. It is always difficult to recognize when our model of self-sufficiency and accountability does not meet the needs of some guests and applicants. We know that there are other resources and pray that each individual finds the assistance they need.

Mary Jo Mason, *Case Manager*

Finding Hope

Many families are struggling financially, behind on their rent, mortgage or utilities and are at risk of losing their homes. **Finding Hope** 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 housing expenses please 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 fourteen 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, organizations and foundations.

Never let your memories be greater than your dreams.

Douglas Ivester



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

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