

## SVdP Email update from March 21, 2025

Hello to all.

- Our good news for this email is that Karen Rott had a very successful surgery and is doing her utmost to do all that she can be doing to have a successful recovery. We have missed Karen, and all she does for SVdP; we are certainly looking forward to seeing her soon. We are grateful she has wisely taken the time to recuperate as needed. Karen and Charlie have a very important anniversary celebration at the end of this month, and we wish them many, many more years of a most wonderful, happy, and joyful life together.
- Marie DeSordi is very much in need of our prayers. Marie and her husband, Ted, have been kind in welcoming me to their home to visit, to share communion and pray the rosary. Marie is on oxygen 24 hours a day and after over a month in the hospital, and rehab she needs rest and much loving care. She is a determined and positive individual! Marie said to let you know how much she appreciates each of you, that she misses you, and thanks you for the cards you have been sending her to keep in touch.
- I delivered Archie Miller's birthday cake along with your cards. At 95 years of age, he is still so very interesting to talk with and our conference has much to be grateful to him for his years of dedication. He asked me to thank you for remembering him.
- At this time Marie Alfano does not have the date for her brother's memorial service, however she will stay in touch with us giving us the opportunity to be with her at this difficult time for her family. Marie and Annette will still coordinate with many of our members the Community Comfort and Fellowship dinner this month on March 27th.
- Our previous Board member, Ben Russell, and Community Comfort and Fellowship volunteer, has been meeting with his physicians. At this time Ben is planning on having his heart surgery on May 8th at Beth Israel Hospital in Newark. When life is more in Ben's favor he would like to return to do some volunteer work. Ben is also grateful for the expression of concern you have been extending to him.
- Please keep Mary Eggeling and Ron's wife, Marilyn, in your thoughts and prayers.

**Treasury:** Sharon Bianchi, our treasurer, has been more than working overtime, and doing a most stellar job. Her responsibilities are always constant, however with Ash Wednesday, it has even been more so with the additional deposits and banking (yet this is certainly a good thing) At this time our treasury has \$31,280.63 which includes Ash Wednesday collections of a total \$9,176.05. The largest collection was from the 12:30 mass and ashes. The 6:00 PM liturgy service and ashes, usually one of the most attended services, did not have our normal crowd due to demanding weather we had that night. Our parish was very supportive in their donations, and I will be putting a notice in our bulletin to express our gratitude.

**Retreat:** We are having a positive response for our sponsored retreat. Many of our members are attending, along with several women from the bible study group "Walking With a Purpose", members of the Rosary Altar Society will share the day with us, and members of other SVdP conferences within the County. Please contact Debbie Weingroff ([dmweingroff@gmail.com](mailto:dmweingroff@gmail.com)), our spiritual advisor, if you are interested in attending. Debbie has been keeping in contact with the retreat facilitator, Sr. Anita of the Sisters of Charity, in making sure the day runs smoothly, plus we will offer a valued reflection especially for the Easter season. The cost is \$10.00 per person; beverages and snacks will be available all day, and please bring your lunch if you choose to do so.

**Stations of the Cross:** Mary Schwarz and Frank Kelly will lead the narrative for the Stations for our parish on April 4th. They both give a great deal of time to the pantry, and we thank you for also offering their time to represent us on the evening of the 4th.

**Fundraising:** Barbara Neary has been staying very focused and diligent in seeking out fundraising efforts. On April 10th we are having our first dining- to- donate this year. The event will be held at Zi Marie's on Route 70, and we will receive 25% of the receipts. Barbara needs help with handing out flyers after each of the masses the weekend of March 29th and 30th. If you can be of help that weekend, please contact Barbara at: ([hellonwheels67@aol.com](mailto:hellonwheels67@aol.com)). The next dining to donate is on June 10th at Jersey Mike's in Silverton. Pat and Paul Capelli have been assisting with coordinating that event.

**Vegetable Garden.** All the new eight vegetable beds have been rebuilt and the next effort is in working on the irrigation system so all will be up and running for the spring planting. Meg Otchy, our master gardener, stayed vigilant throughout the winter months in preparing for the spring. Charlie Yannelli and Matt MacCarrick recently completed the rebuilding of the beds and Jessie, from Fulfill, will come to St. Luke's to help with the irrigation project. Several of our members are dedicated to our garden ministry however, more volunteers are always welcome

**Helping Hands:** Christina Cotgreave, and the creative team of our volunteer members have been sorting through. and donating the balance of the winter clothing to other organizations. They have been preparing for the opening of their "spring line" of Helping Hands clothing items at the end of March. Donations of seasonal clothing for spring and summer will be accepted from the end of March and throughout the season. A wonderful donation of pocketbooks was given to Helping Hands from Redeem Her House - an important community connection.

**Food pantry:** Our coordinator, Mary Schwarz, and all the Food Pantry volunteers have been handling the demands of keeping the pantry filled and organized. The efforts are physically a lot with trucks of food being delivered throughout the week. If you know of some additional friends or neighbors who would like to help out, this would be very much appreciated. At this time Mary is applying for a grant for a new computer. We are saying a few prayers and keeping fingers crossed.

**Intake volunteer members, home visitors and our coordinators,** Joe Damato and Michelle Jones, have been handling many requests from individuals and families throughout the winter. This is due to some extreme sickness, medical bills, car repairs, price of food, rent increases, lack of affordable housing within our county, etc. Our members treat all guests with dignity, care, and compassion and that is stated in many of the thank you notes we received from our guests.

**North Dover Elementary School** has been donating to our food pantry and the principal, Colleen McGrath, and a member of the faculty, have encouraged several students to be part of a community outreach program called "Ambassadors." They will keep in touch with us every 5/6 weeks to find out what is needed in the food pantry and Helping Hands and will begin to have collections at the school to help where help and supplies are needed. During the morning announcements on Tuesday, we presented one of our framed certificates of gratitude to the faculty, staff, and students.

**Furniture Ministry:** Pat and Paul Capelli have been volunteering with other SVdP conference members in neighboring parishes in training on how to successfully help families when in need of furniture. The process takes visits to a family's home and visits to the Vincent's Legacy warehouse. They continue to turn a house into a home for many people.

**Board meetings.** Our Board meetings are held on Mondays after the Food Pantry and Helping Hands close for the day. Jill Bradley, our secretary, takes copious notes at every meeting, and Kathy Minton, technology, puts the completed notes on our website. Jill keeps in touch with Linda Panaccione, our registrar, in keeping us organized and up to date on SVdP requirements as volunteers. At this time, we have 110 volunteers in our conference.

**Technology:** Kathy Minton continually updates our website: [svdpstluke.org](http://svdpstluke.org). The County SVdP president was so impressed with what Kathy has created for us, she asked Kathy to assist with the SVdP Diocesan website. Kathy wanted to let you know that members have been buying clothing from our on- line store, and we have had no concerns with deliveries. Farro-Tees does a lot for us to make sure the process makes for a smooth transaction.

Our member, **Dianne Picciotti**, has sold her home in Toms River and will be moving within the next month. This was a big decision, and we wish her and her family much happiness as she takes this next step. Dianne has been with our conference for many years volunteering at the front desk and always keeping accurate records of our Board decisions on the computer. It will be difficult to have Mondays without her.

I am still a board member of the **Toms River Housing and Homeless County Coalition**, and have been attending the Town Hall meetings for the last 5 months. Debbie Weingroff and Ed Rohloff attended meetings with regard to the homeless shelter proposed at 405 Washington Street. Ben, Meg, and Meg's sister, Mary and I did attend the last meeting together. The meetings are hours long and there is still no resolve. The zoning board members do seem supportive, and we respect this is a big decision. The next meeting is in April - I will continue to keep our conference up to date. I will be attending an additional meeting on April 7th that is being held at the St. Paul Lutheran Church in Beachwood. The Rev. Hartney, Chairperson for the Ocean County Board of Social Services, sent the invitation last week with regard to the meeting to continue necessary support to many of the residents in the County who are being subjected to demanding rents and food insecurity. We can discuss this together at our May general meeting.

We received a lovely letter from **Pastor Rhetta** (our guest speaker at our previous general meeting) expressing her gratitude for the continuous support of St. Luke's parishioners and SVdP members for the extended support throughout this winter and Code Blue. Our goal is to continue this effort together next year. 400 homeless individuals were given a warm place to sleep, food and supplies due to the effort of a caring community.

I will be having surgery on March 26th at Jersey Shore University Hospital to remove a tumor that is pressing on the pituitary gland (the smaller tumor the doctor said I can keep; it's not a problem.) I have seen 7 specialists, had many tests, and insurance has been excellent. One of my sons is a physician at the hospital and can assist with getting me settled in the morning of the surgery. Yeah! The tumor is not cancerous, it's just large, growing too fast, it's in the way, and has had demanding symptoms. There will be two surgeons the morning of the surgery and the doctors anticipate I will be in the hospital for four days. Family members are arriving the day before surgery and staying after I arrive home. I talked with each of my grandchildren separately so they would understand this is just a glitch and families fix glitches. I will miss being at St. Luke's for a few weeks, and I will miss being with you.

"Again, we keep this solemn fast, a gift of faith from ages past, this lent which binds us lovingly to faith, hope and charity. More sparing, therefore let us make the words we speak, the food we Tak, our sleep, ev'ry sense; learn peace through holy penitence." Gregory the Great.

Thoughts are with you, *Gemma*

PS our family had the joy of a new baby born on March 18th - Cameron John. He's beautiful and healthy. We had hope for a March 17th birth but he missed the date by 3 hrs.