

Shelter the Homeless/Welcome the Stranger



**Sculpture by artist Timothy P. Schmalz in St. Luke's Courtyard
(St. Luke's-Schenectady)**

"In truth, I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me." Mt 25:40

"The *Homeless Jesus* sculpture is a visual representation of Matthew 25. The sculpture suggests that Christ is with the most marginalized in our society. The Christ figure is shrouded in a blanket with His face covered with the only indication that the figure is Jesus being the visible wounds on the feet."

https://www.sculpturebytps.com/portfolio_page/homeless-jesus/

Pick a nice day and visit one of the life-size versions of the *Homeless Jesus*. The statue is located in the courtyard in front of St. Luke's Church here in Schenectady. Spend time in reflection and prayer about how you are called to live the works of mercy.

Shelter the Homeless/Welcome the Stranger

The work of mercy of *Shelter the Homeless* is also known as *Welcome the Stranger*. While the immediate thought that may come to mind when you hear *Shelter the Homeless* is typically about the need to have a warm and dry roof over one's head, this work of mercy also challenges us to expand our definition to include the interpersonal need to be connected. To

Welcome the Stranger includes the need to be kind in all of our encounters and help others feel a sense of belonging. It includes the need to value each and every human being as worthy of dignity and respect.

Here are some ways you can make sure you are *welcoming the strangers* you encounter each day.

- Share a smile. The simple act of smiling at someone and greeting them acknowledges that you see them and that they have worth.
- Choose your words carefully. Make sure the things you say in conversation, even when joking, are not offensive. The age old saying applies, “If you don’t have something nice to say, don’t say anything at all”.
- Take time to listen. Everyone has important things to say and information to share.
- Choose to be inclusive. Introduce yourself to the new kid in class, coworker, fellow parishioner, neighbor, etc. Help them feel a sense of belonging by offering to help them become acclimated to their new environment and inviting them to join in activities.
- Be self-aware. Do you approach people or situations with bias? Take time to reflect on this and make a commitment to learn and grow. Remember, we are all made in the image of God. *“How good and pleasant it is, when brothers dwell together as one!” (Psalms 133:1)*

Below are some of the organizations who assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness in our local community. Explore the links below to learn more about these organizations and how you can get involved.



Schenectady Home Furnishings provides “usable donated furniture and household furnishings to families and individuals in transition from emergency situations”

To learn more about Schenectady Home Furnishings and opportunities to help, please visit their website at: www.schenectadyhomefurnishings.org



Has served the homeless and impoverished in Schenectady County since 1992. To learn more, visit:

<https://www.bethesdahs.org/page/get-involved-6.html>



Provides shelter and much more to homeless men, women and children. Shelters are open 24/7, 365 days a year-- "ready to welcome people as they arrive off the streets". To learn more, visit:

<https://citymission.com/get-involved/>



Mission: "To affirm the humanity and dignity of homeless families, and to engage our community in helping them achieve sustainable independence." To learn more, visit:

<https://www.familypromisecr.org/get-involved/>