

For a Times Like These, God Provides Through St. John Neumann's Good Samaritan Ministry

“And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.’” (Matthew 25:40)

Thanks to the generosity of our St. John Neumann Parish family, the gift of peace-of-mind and neighborly love is extended to those with acute financial need.

We hope you enjoy this behind-the-scenes look at this wonderful ministry.

St. John Neumann has long supported those who arrive at the Rectory in need of immediate financial support. This effort has been reshaped from an in-the-moment response to a group of committed parishioners now called the Good Samaritans. The team is made up of seven parishioners, growing initially from members of our Bible Study. The team expanded again from sign-ups at a Ministry Time/Talent event. The results have been amazing.

Real situations in tough times: When money gets tight, it is very challenging to ensure the bills are paid. In some cases, there is no more money to make the water, electricity, or the tax bill payment. Perhaps the urgent need is food for the kids or a rent payment; possibly gas to get to work for the next week or so. Difficult financial times impact families, individuals, the elderly, the young, single moms... When the situation gets dire and those in need seek assistance, we're often their last stop. In one instance, a police officer in Bryn Mawr recommended contacting the Rectory. And, we're glad to be there when they knock on our door – the Holy Spirit leads them to us and us to them. But here's the reality: they need support and they need it *right then*. Food and shelter. Our team needs to *move fast* and that's when our Good Samaritan Ministry hits “go”.



A Good Samaritan team member engages to get to know the person and their need. This is not an easy task for anyone involved. It takes courage to come forward and ask for help – to make visible a difficult situation. Our team needs to gently discern the situation to assess if our ministry is able to assist. Upon team approval (this happens quickly!) funds are released, store-specific gift cards are purchased (e.g. Giant), bills are paid, or a non-financial solution is created. Cash or checks are never given to the recipient. Those with ongoing financial needs are redirected to agencies that are better positioned to support. Of note, the ministry team members uniformly give a big shout-out to the responsiveness and support of our St. John Neumann Business Manager, Joy. These folks are in need; the sun doesn't set on their difficulties. Joy's work is streamlined and quick. In other cases, the team has faced super-urgent situations, for example, a utility is going to shut-off service in a matter of hours. In these cases, our team members might use their own means to pay the bill and then receive reimbursement from the Good Samaritan fund. No matter what, the interaction with those seeking assistance is meant to be life-giving for all involved.

Some thoughts from the team: It is very humbling work. We sit across the table and hear their stories – we feel their need. They are brave to come forward, communicate and share. We're strangers to them, just as they are to us. It's challenging but we do the best we can. We seek to be open and listen. We seek to be Christ-like. We're just a conduit for God.

And so they are. The Holy Spirit leads those in need to St. John Neumann and we try to help as Jesus asks us to. And, God provides: we've heard these stories before and it's happened with Good Samaritan: a donor makes a contribution and within a very short time someone comes forth with a need of similar amount. This only happens when God makes the plan and we help out.

If you'd like to support the Good Samaritan fund, donations of *any* amount are appreciated. Please place your donation in the offertory boxes located near each door of the church. *Thank you.*