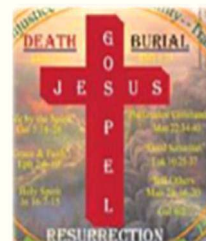




*** THE MIRACLE NEWS ***



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twitter.com/1ststepbackhome
youtube.com/@FirstStepBackHome

God's Word Is a Lamp Unto My Feet And a Light Unto My Path (Psalm 119: 100-110)

By Paul Kruse

with excerpts from "What Does Psalm 119:105 Mean?"

Knowing-Jesus.com

We are living in a fallen world and **God's Word** is a gleaming light to guide us through this dark world of sin. **God's Word** provides a strong foundation for us to stand in a darkened world that is falling apart.

Scripture is our secure guidebook to return us to a right relationship with our **Lord** when we stray from the road of righteousness and the path of peace.

The Bible teaches us how to take away all uncertainty of life by showing us the steps we need to take to avoid sin the best we can and ask **God in Jesus'** name for forgiveness of sins committed.

This will re-energize our hope in **Jesus** and give us wisdom and understanding (Prov. 9:10) when we walk humbly before the **Lord** following His lead. Now that our path is straight and our faith is strengthened in our **Savior**, He lifts the darkness we live in and straightens every path.

He not only strengthens our path but guards us through our lives and warns us of each lurking danger we may face. He gives us wisdom to guide our thinking, promises to encourage our hearts, and instruction in **Godly** living. Our **Lord** provides the perfect pattern for Christian living and daily conduct. **God's Word** has told us what will happen from the beginning to the end and each page of the Bible is our light that shines in a dark place. It is **God's** tool to lead us into holiness and to guide our feet into His way of truth, the **Gospel**.

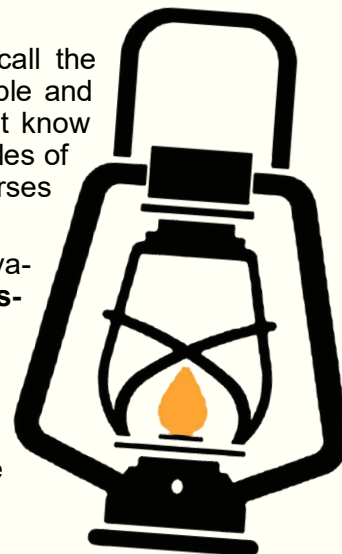
So, what is the **Gospel**? Which sometimes I call the Ghostspel because it's the main truth of the Bible and not many are defining it to others who may not know what it is. There are many verses to give examples of

it, but my favorite is 1 Corinthians 15, the whole chapter. Basically, these verses describe the life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension of **Jesus the Christ**.

"I am not ashamed of the **Gospel of Christ**: for it is the power of **God** unto salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jews first then also the Gentiles. The **Gospel** is the power of **God** over Satan and sin." (Romans 1:16)

The main message of the **Gospel** is the resurrection of **Jesus**. This is what separates Christianity from all other religions. **Jesus** is the only recorded religious leader that **God** has raised from the dead as He said He would. So, we can rest assured that everything else promised us regarding **Jesus**, eternal life and better life on earth is true and we can count on it.

Jesus' Resurrection is the most important event that ever happened on earth!





Taste of St. Charles Casino Night Benefits Clients Needing Cars

In January, **Nick Johnson**, President of the **Rotary Club of St. Charles, Noonday**, presented Paul & Lana Kruse with the proceeds from their Casino Night fundraiser event that had taken place last November. **THANK YOU, St. Charles Rotary**, for supporting our work!

With the \$4,000 proceeds from their annual Taste of St. Charles event we will help clients acquire reliable transportation...i.e. good, reliable used cars for work and essential needs.



2023 Give STL Day Coming May 10th

giveSTLDay.org
POWERED BY THE
St. Louis Community
Foundation

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

This year's **Give STL Day** will be the 10th year for this amazing fundraiser platform in our region and it will happen on the 10th of May. FSBH has participated for the past 8 years and we have been blessed with wonderful funding from friends and supporters of our ministry.

Would you please mark the date in your calendars **NOW** and plan to support our cause sometime during the 24- hour one day giving platform? For the 6th year in a row last year, we won the midnight hour \$1,000 prize for most dollars raised by a micro-charity. FSBH came in 11th overall, out of 1024 non-profits that participated in the day, raising more than \$63,000 from 65 donors. You can help us achieve this year's goals with as little as a \$10 donation that day.

The giving site is givelstlday.org/firststepbackhome.

At this time, we're seeking some match-gift supporters. Last year we had \$33,000 available to create incentives for giving on THE DAY. So far we have \$2,000 committed for 2023. Maybe you'd like to be a part of that effort.

If so, please contact **Lana Kruse** for how to make that happen: lanakruse@gmail.com.

Mission Financial Open House

Last December we were showered upon by clients of **Mission Financial**, St. Peters, at their annual Christmas Open House. Many brought filled laundry baskets, toys and funds for gift cards for some of the 120 families who attended our 14th Annual Christmas later that month.

Thanks to **Janssen Longenecker** and his caring team for all the support they bring to us throughout the year!



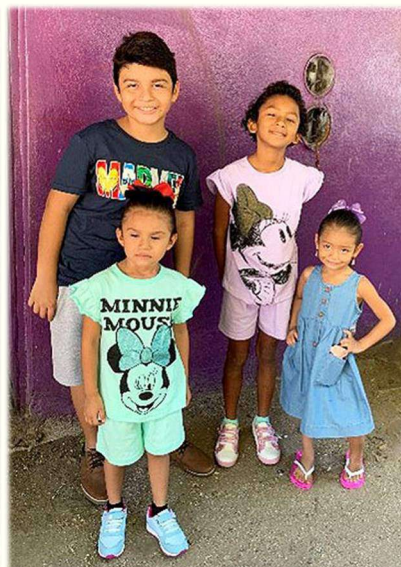


Helping Where Ever We Can

While on a recent vacation trip to Acapulco, Mexico in February, we wanted to help a needy family. Our friendly English-speaking taxi driver knew of an extended family of 10 people living in a two-room shanty without running water. The house belongs to the great-grandmother, Isabel, who is bedridden, and her 72-year old husband. The younger generations live there with them.

We were able to take the two young mothers (23 and 18) to Walmart and get them food, clothing and cleaning supplies. The children were all so very happy with their new outfits, and the mamas promised us they would invest some time cleaning up the place with the items we provided.

As they were profusely thanking us for all of this blessing, we told them to thank **Jesus**. He's the great provider...and get to church EVERY week, not just occasionally. They said they would. (I, Lana, even got a kiss on the cheek from the 8-year old boy!)



SAVE THE DATE!

15th ANNUAL CHRISTMAS WONDERLAND

DECEMBER 16, 2023

Watch for info on how you can take part!



Magic Makers and Golden Falcons



The **Magic Makers Volunteer Group** - about eight youngsters from St. Charles, MO formed this service group a few months ago. With their parents, they have created some interesting fundraisers for local organizations. In January, on a cold, wintery day they offered hot cocoa for \$2 donations, to be used to help our ministry.

They raised \$210 to be used for FSBH clients to have a warm spot to sleep on the cold nights of winter. Their funds provided about 3 nights of lodging at local motels in our service area.

It's so encouraging to see young people have hearts to serve and change our world for the better! Way to go **Magic Makers**! They also brought us 384 small hand sanitizers which we have been passing out to clients in recent days.

Some of the young people from the **Magic Makers** are also part of a group of third graders from the **Golden Falcons' Robotics Club**, Chesterfield, who wanted to help the homeless as well.

This group of 8-year-olds organized a sandwich making project and brought tasty food to the Economy Inn as part of our daily meals program. Their leader said the kids enjoyed the project thoroughly and were happy to see clients enjoy the food. They talked about how blessed and thankful they are. She said it was a huge life lesson for the kids. We expect to see more of both of these groups of caring young people in the coming days!



Chili Cookoff Judges

We enjoyed about 12 tasty, very different and interesting chilis at this fun event at **Warrenton Christian Church** on January 21, 2023.

We were able to share our ministry activities as part of the activities.

Olivia's Chili was the judge's choice, and the Jesus Chili was the most popular by the crowd. Warrenton Christian Church has been a longtime supporter of **FSBH**.





14th Annual Christmas Wonderland Blessings



We had a good day at our **14th Annual Christmas Wonderland** on Saturday, December 10, 2022 at **Wentzville United Methodist Church**. The faces of the children are one of the biggest blessings of the event.

A total of 120 fragile families had pre-registered for this popular local event, and that represented 252 children, 67 teens and 250 adults. There were 60% new families this year.

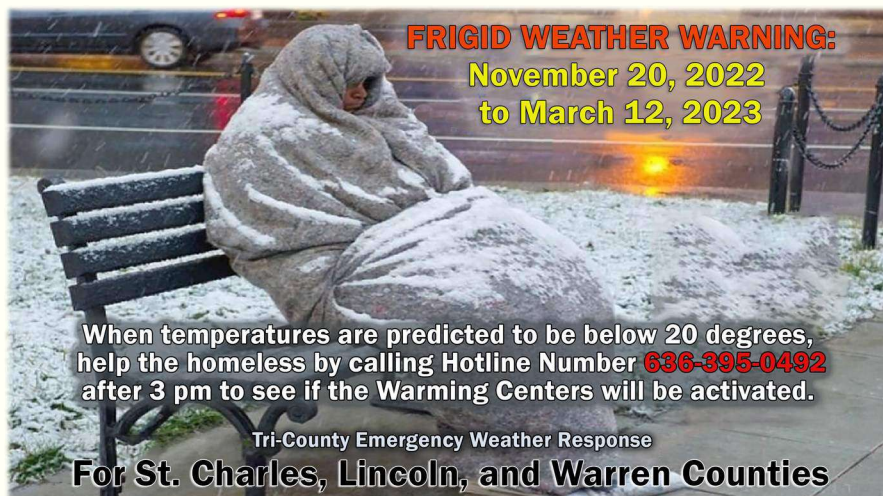
About 40 volunteers were on hand to assure that all went smoothly during the drive-through event where families picked up filled laundry baskets, Bibles, diapers, snack food, toys, handmade gifts and quilts. Each family was also provided a \$25 Walmart gift card, thanks to the generosity of FSBH donors.

More pictures from the event are on our [Facebook](#) page.





Emergency Weather Response Update



Many will say that this past winter season has been rather mild. But for those unhoused neighbors needing a shelter on some of the bitter cold nights, even one instance could have brought life-changing consequences. For the 2022-2023 season, there have been 15 activations of the **Emergency Weather Response (EWR)** team, as of the first of March. These have been held at seven different locations, primarily churches, and 164 data intakes have been done for 76 households. A total of 181 bed nights of lodging have been provided. All of this year's activities have been organized by volunteers in the three-

county region of St. Charles, Warren and Lincoln Counties.

Activation occurs when temps are predicted to be 20 degrees or lower. Keep the hotline number handy, as it will always relate current information on activations for those needing a warm place to stay on bitter cold winter nights. **636-395-0492**

Mobile Home Park Ministry Continues to Go Strong



16,238...that's how many days of housing we have provided to 70 different people since Feb. 2016 through the end of 2022. In January we celebrated the current families living in our seven units with a Fellowship Dinner. Board members **Mayor Nick Guccione, Tom & Cheryl Street, and Paul & Lana Kruse** hosted the event at the clubhouse of one of the mobile home parks where we own units.



Lots of ministry helpers were on hand to bless the mobile home park community at our **7th Annual Thanksgiving Dinner**...drive-thru style once again last November. 230 meals were sent out the door with turkey and all the trimmings. It was a brisk, windy COLD day! Huge THANKS to **Tom & Cheryl Street** for coordinating the effort once again with all their friends from **Gateway Church, St. Peters**, who donated sides and pies.



Food for the Body and Warmth for the Soul

It was a cold, wintry evening one weekday last fall when **Show Me Your Hands** brought over Thanksgiving Dinner to clients at the local motel and students from **Urshan College, Wentzville** brought three car loads of coats, hats, and gloves. The meal was filling and enjoyed by about 30 people.

Many of those who came were doubly blessed as they were given warm clothing from a collection done at a college close to our motel meals venue. The students engaged with the fragile families who were there and prayed with several of them as well.



Meal Ministry Update

The Meal Ministry continues to be a vital source of care for families staying at the Economy Inn, and the groups provide not only food for hungry stomachs, but also show the love of Jesus to hungry souls. We are grateful for all the individuals, families and groups that give of their time and efforts to serve.

Over the last quarter, new servers included **St. Paul Church St. Vincent de Paul Society, First Assembly Church, Golden Falcons, Traccy Happe & friends & family, Urshan College, and Church on the Rock.**

We still have many open dates for groups that would like to volunteer. The [calendar](#) can be viewed online. To volunteer to help in the Meal Ministry, contact our Meal Coordinator, **Krista Zahn** at 636-299-0347 or email fsbhmeals@gmail.com.





Client Services Overview: 2022

Here's an overview of where your donations were used in 2022. 320 client households, representing 423 adults, 227 children and 23 seniors have been impacted by your gifts, with services rendered in all the categories listed below. **THANK YOU** so much for every amount you donate. We will continue to use these funds to help the homeless and fragile families in our region.

Service Summary

Service Date Between: 1/1/2022 to 12/31/2022

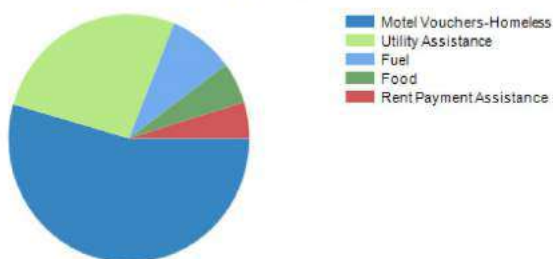
Organization(s): First Step Back Home



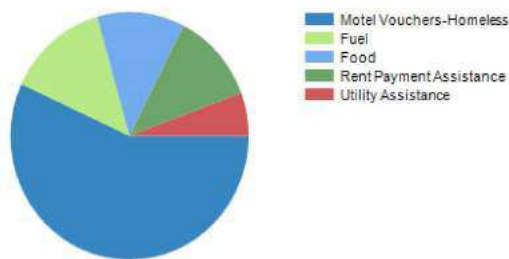
St. Charles, Lincoln, & Warren
Continuum of Care

First Step Back Home

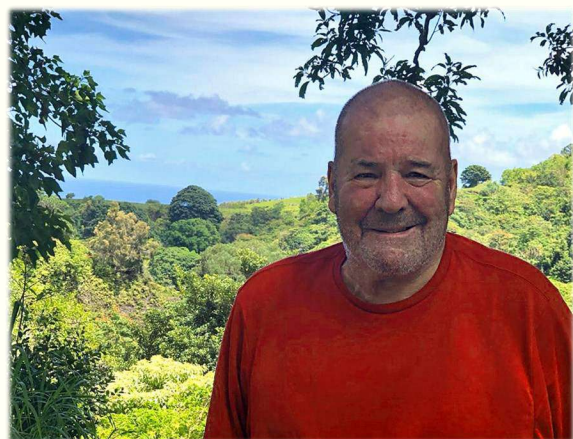
Top 5 Services by Units



Top 5 Services by Clients



Service	Units	Total	Clients	Families	Adults	Children	Seniors
Assistance to purchase vehicle	15.00	\$11,848.31	12	11	17	5	0
Car repair	17.00	\$3,458.99	17	17	28	16	0
Cell phone	16.00	\$1,216.56	16	15	17	4	0
Cell Phone Minutes	10.00	\$876.93	7	7	8	9	0
Clothing	15.00	\$1,458.70	14	13	16	3	0
Food	48.00	\$3,117.23	38	36	47	18	0
Fuel	78.00	\$2,060.67	44	42	72	42	5
Healthcare	1.00	\$20.00	1	1	1	0	0
Household Goods	5.00	\$1,214.89	4	4	7	1	0
Mobile Home Expenses	14.00	\$3,035.93	5	5	8	13	0
Motel Vouchers-Homeless	485.00	\$46,397.40	182	179	220	90	14
Personal hygiene items	4.00	\$59.86	4	4	6	4	0
Rent Payment Assistance	42.00	\$10,128.98	38	39	57	32	1
Rental Arrears Payments	9.00	\$2,478.42	9	9	12	7	1
Rental Deposit	16.00	\$2,885.00	16	16	20	17	3
School Supplies	3.00	\$695.87	3	3	4	2	0
Storage	14.00	\$2,690.66	11	11	16	16	1
Transportation	9.00	\$1,595.77	8	6	8	5	0
Utility Arrears	8.00	\$2,200.71	8	8	7	19	0
Utility Assistance	238.00	\$3,959.91	18	18	26	13	1
Utility Deposit Assistance	2.00	\$252.50	2	2	4	4	0
Organization Total:	1,049.00	\$101,653.29	323	320	423	227	23



Tom Lowery Memorial Donations

Twenty-two friends and family of **Tom Lowery** made special contributions to **First Step Back Home** in his memory over the past two months. Tom's wife, **Sandy**, has been a volunteer and donor to FSBH for several years, and decided to designate our ministry for memorials upon the passing of her dear husband on December 22, 2022.

A total of \$1665 was donated, which will be used to help the homeless and fragile families we connect with over the next few weeks.

Here are the donors and some of their comments and well wishes for Sandy and her family:

- **Tom & Amy Clark**- In loving memory.
- **Kathleen Pearson**
- **Joe & Christine Patrico** – In remembrance for a good friend. You could always count on many laughs when Tom was around. Love you Tom. You will be missed.
- **Sharon Randolph**
- **Jennifer Campanella**
- **Nancy Dauer**
- **Grant & Valari Harrison**- Someone I will never forget. Tom was generous with his love for others and especially his family, and he was loved back just the same. May he rest in peace.
- **Diane Caffey**
- **Maureen Mueller**
- **Leena Stemier**
- **Thomas & Joann Lauck**
- **Kathie Turner**
- **John & Patricia Loraine**- In loving memory
- **Michael & Patty Feldewerth**
- **Tony & Cathy Lange**
- **Rick Delargy**
- **Gary Gaydos** – Tom was a great landlord and a kind, caring person. I send my prayers to Sandy Lowery and the Lowery family. It was a blessing to get to know Tom and Sandy throughout my years living on 3rd Street.
- **Clement & Patrice Komoroski**
- **Lynne Anne Rocklage**
- **R. Scott & Cynthia Wilcox**
- **Cynthia Rohr**
- **Jim & Maureen Greene**

Cuivre River Operation Round Up Funds Pay for Motel Stays



Once again, the **Cuivre River Electric Cooperative's (CREC) Operation Round Up (ORU) Trust** has funded **FSBH** with money for emergent lodging at local motels this year. In February we received \$3,000 which will provide about 40 nights of stays at one of the several motels used by our ministry to help our unhoused neighbors when they call daily for help.

Tim Schmidt, ORU Coordinator, told us that 16 different organizations asked for \$64,000, but only \$18,000 was available to be supplied. Over the past 18 years, **FSBH** has benefitted from being selected for these special funds with the provision of \$126,000! We are so thankful for support such as this, where many customers of the CREC utility service "round up" their monthly bills to the next dollar, providing the "cents" that build to the amounts that are able to bless many different charities and needy families.



Recent Donor Acknowledgements

We want to thank several businesses, churches and community groups who have financially supported FSBH this past quarter with these recent gifts. Some gifts have been made in honor or in memory of loved ones.

- \$4,000 – **St. Charles Noonday Rotary Club** (See story on page 2.)
- \$3,500 – **Vermeer Sales & Service**, Chesterfield
- \$3,000 – **Cuivre River Operation Round Up** (See story on page 9.)
- \$2,200 – **Gateway Church** “Share a Blessing”, St. Peters
- \$1,900 – **Mission Financial-** St. Peters
- \$1,665 – Memorial in honor of **Tom Lowery**, St. Charles (See story on page 9.)
- \$1,432 – **Mary Martha Thrift Shop**
- \$1,000 – **St. John’s UCC**, St. Charles
- \$1,000 – **Central Presbyterian Church**, Clayton
- \$1,000 – **Industrial Ally**, Chesterfield
- \$ 900 – **Element Church**, Wentzville
- \$ 700 – **Wentzville United Methodist Men’s Group**
- \$ 650 – **Boeing** Corporate Match from employee gift
- \$ 600 – **Grace Community Chapel**, St. Peters
- \$ 600 – **Chapel of the Lake**, Lake St. Louis
- \$ 500 – **Warrenton Christian Church**
- \$ 486 - **Thrivent Choice Dollars** as allocations from **Dennis & Donna Hall, Judith Johnson, David Nickel and Joe & Tina Koncki**
- \$ 446 – **New Life Church**, O’Fallon
- \$ 400 - **Ladies Auxiliary of Knights of Columbus Council 823**, St. Charles
- \$ 225 – **Moneta Group**, Clayton, in honor of **Ken Kilen**, St. Charles
- \$ 210 – **Magic Makers** Volunteer Group (See story on page 4.)
- \$ 200 – **Dardenne Presbyterian Church Women’s Group**
- \$ 200 – **Church of God**, Grubville
- \$ 10 – **AT&T** corporate match for employee gift
- \$ 23 – **AmazonSmile**
- \$ 2 – **PayPal Giving Fund**

Thank You



We are so very thankful to all of you who think of donating to our public charity when opportunities present.

Thank you to everyone who has participated in the AmazonSmile program and chosen First Step Back Home to receive donations. Unfortunately, Amazon has now ended this program. We are looking at other opportunities for giving.





Donation Methods to Support FSBH

We want to remind you that your tax-deductible charitable donation is a great way to support the ministry. We are a public charity per IRS Regulations of a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations will be receipted for tax-deductible documentation purposes. Here are several options to consider:

- **Corporate Matching Grant Donations**
 - Some matching grant companies are **Industrial Ally, AT&T, Wells Fargo, Monsanto, Boeing, MasterCard, Pfizer, VMWare, and Thrivent Financial Services.**
 - Boeing and perhaps other corporations offer **volunteer time grant matches.** If you volunteer 25 hours with our ministry, Boeing will send a \$250 cash gift.
 - If you work for a company that offers match gifting, please initiate the paperwork for this to be done, and we'll complete the required elements so you and others can participate.
- **Write a Check payable to "First Step Back Home"** and send to the following address:
First Step Back Home, Inc.
Paul Kruse
PO Box 966
O'Fallon MO 63366
- **Log onto our ministry website and click PayPal** for direct donation via your credit card. There is a small fee charged to the ministry with this option: firststepbackhome.net
- **Thrivent Members** can create an "Action Team" and receive \$250 "seed money" twice per year for charitable causes. Details can be found at this link: thrivent.com/actionteam.

FSBH Board Supplies Diverse Expertise

FSBH is governed by a Board of Directors who meet regularly to oversee all functions of the ministry. Those currently serving on the Board are these gifted people:

Paul W. Kruse- Founder and Visionary for the ministry, serving as President and CEO. Also serves as primary Caseworker for daily client services.

Lana M. Kruse- Co-founder, serving as Treasurer and Executive Administrator, coordinating Fundraisers, Newsletter Development and Donor Relations

Cheryl Street- Retired Cardiac Nurse Practitioner, serving as Secretary

Tom Street- Pharmacist, serving as Leader for Mobile Home Project and Trucker Church Services. Coordinator of annual Gospelfests.

Dave Bonney- Retired computer software consultant, founder of **Broken n Beautiful Women's Prison Ministry** working with State of Missouri Department of Corrections in coordinating transitional housing facilities for offenders upon release.

Mayor Nick Guccione- Mayor City of Wentzville, serving as Board Member networking with local resources to benefit ministry.

Mike Derr- Retired CPA, serving as Board Member, lending expertise in Financial matters of Accounting and Budgeting.

Janet Derr- Retired Paralegal, serving as Board Member, supporting special projects including Christmas Wonderland gifts for families.

FSBH is celebrating 18 years of service this month, and God has provided more than \$3 MILLION in resources to help us make a difference for the homeless and fragile families in St. Charles, Warren and Lincoln Counties.