

The Miracle News

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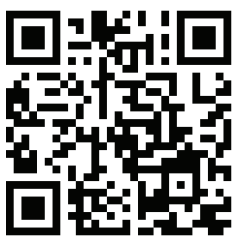
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God's Spiritual Strength Within Us

By Paul Kruse

We all have challenges that test our faith and sense of empowerment. This is when we need to remember that God's strength is always present within us, His believers, always ready to support us. The Bible encourages us to put into action His strength and unwavering presence.

We really need to feel and trust in His presence, which is the key to His help and miracles! When we know He is present, we can talk to Him in reverence, just like any other person. We can experience His strength if we talk to Him and study His word to us in the Bible. The following verses will encourage us to get through these challenges and move on with life. They are compiled from an article titled "30 Powerful Verses about God's Strength in Us."- PK

The Source of Our Strength

We must always remember our strength doesn't come from us but from God! We are never alone! God's spiritual strength within us refers to the divine spiritual power and empowerment we receive through faith in God.

I can do all things through Him who gives me strength. Phil. 4:13

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. (Isaiah 40:29)

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and He helps me. My heart leaps for Joy, and with my song I praise Him. Psalm 28:7

But he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, I will boast more gladly about my weakness, so that Jesus' power may rest in me. 2 Cor. 12:9

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1

Strength During Trials

We all feel overwhelmed at times. This is when we find comfort and strength in God's promises. With God, we can handle challenges and emerge stronger, knowing He is with us. With faith, we can rise above circumstances, fully trusting that every challenge serves a purpose in our growth!

And the God of all Grace, who called you to His Eternal Glory in Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 1 Peter 5:10

When anxiety was great within me. Your consolation brought me joy. Psalm 94:19

So do not fear, for I am with you, do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will uphold you with my righteous hand. Isaiah 41:10

Overcoming Fear

When we are overwhelmed with fear, with God we can overcome fear. From experience, I can tell you fear causes mental and physical anguish. Also, if you have diabetes like me, it causes blood sugar and blood pressure to rise. So, anytime we can avoid fear we are better off mentally and physically. Through God we learn to trust Him and not let fear control us because of God's strength in us.

Do not fear for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine! Isaiah 43:1

For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and Love and self-control. 2 Timothy 1:7

For nothing will be impossible with God. Luke 1:37

Continued on Page 11



WE'RE CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE HOMELESS AND FRAGILE FAMILIES IN OUR AREA! PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE:

FIRST STEP BACK HOME BARBEQUE

FRIDAY, OCT. 17

5-8 PM

CHAPEL OF THE LAKE FELLOWSHIP HALL
11000 VETERANS MEMORIAL PARKWAY
LAKE ST. LOUIS, MO 63367

- **DELICIOUS BBQ FROM CROSSED HEART BBQ MINISTRY**
- **TESTIMONIES OF CHANGED LIVES**
- **LIVE MUSIC FEATURING YESTERDAY'S NEWS BAND**
- **ATTENDANCE PRIZES - CARDINALS, BLUES, MIZZOU THEMED BASKETS AND MORE!!**

SIGN UP HERE:



**\$25 EACH OR
\$150 FOR SIX**

On Friday, October 17, 2025 FSBH will be holding it's 20 Year Celebration Event to reflect and recall all that God has accomplished in this ministry since it's founding in 2005. We hope our donors, stakeholders and clients will all come together to praise God for all He's accomplished through the years. Enjoy fellowship and a yummy BBQ meal being lovingly put together by the Crossed Heart Barbeque Ministry run by Smoky Scott Sheeley and his team. Come casual...cowboy boots 'n all (if you wish)!

12th Annual Give STL Day Raised \$3.5 M!

More than 950 nonprofits participated in this year's 12th Annual Give STL Day on May 8, 2025, raising more than \$3.5 million by 15,178 donors. Powered by the St. Louis Community Foundation, FSBH was once again a part of this amazing platform. Collectively we raised more than \$56,000. That includes our matching gift donors, known ministry supporters, anonymous supporters and prizes.

Give STL Day was created by the St. Louis Community Foundation in 2014. In its 12 year history, Give STL Day has:

- Raised more than \$37 million for thousands of local nonprofits.
- Ignited the spirit of charitable giving in more than 160,000 donors.
- Generated more than \$11 million in matching funds.
- Awarded more than \$1.9 million in cash prizes to participating organizations.

FSBH has participated in this highly effective fundraiser for the past decade, raising more than \$460,000. This campaign fulfills about 1/4 of our annual budgetary needs.



FREE Community Dinners in Wentzville

Starting on Tuesday evenings in September and throughout the school year, FREE Community Meals are being served at Heritage Elementary School. This location is relatively close to the three motels we use for clients, so we're hoping they'll take advantage of the food and fellowship they will provide. Please help us pass the word!



Waypoint Serve Day Blessings

Gorgeous weather happened May 17th for the annual Waypoint Serve Day helping us w/ much needed yard work and tree trimming at one of our mobile homes. No more tree limbs touching the roof, awning over porch repaired and about 20 bags of yard waste/leaves/limbs were bagged up by this eager team, led by FSBH Board Member Keith Walton. We're so thankful and blessed by the many ways Waypoint Church serves in the community.



How Do We Help the Homeless and Fragile Families?

Service Summary Jan - June 2025

The chart below depicts expenses FSBH has covered for 205 families the first half of the year, representing 289 adults, 138 children and 14 seniors. The left pie chart indicates services by units, or numbers, not dollars spent. We spent \$54,013 on direct client needs during that period. We primarily know about client needs from referrals that are generated out of the 211 Coordinated Entry Referral System.

Service Summary

Run by Ikruse - First Step Back Home on 7/2/2025 at 6:27 PM



Service Date Between: 1/1/2025 to 6/30/2025

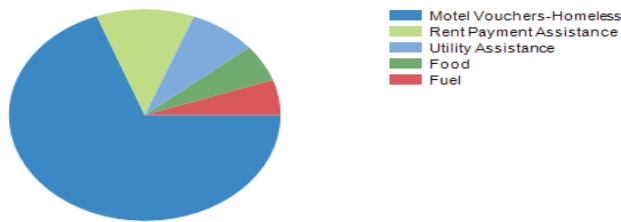
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Organization(s): First Step Back Home

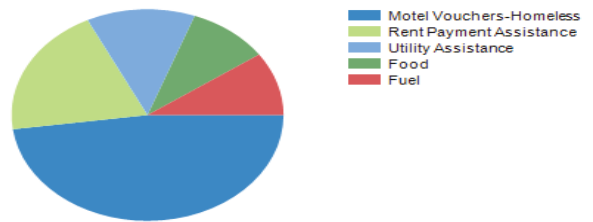
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First Step Back Home

Top 5 Services by Units



Top 5 Services by Clients

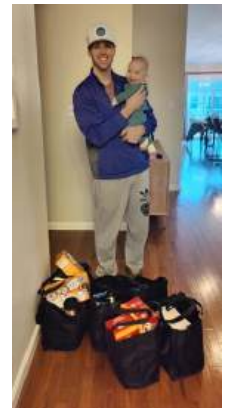


Service	Entries	Units	Total	Clients	Families	Adults	Children	Seniors
Assistance to purchase vehicle	4	4.00	\$6,555.87	4	4	5	5	0
Car repair	13	13.00	2,851.28	12	12	23	15	0
Cell phone	8	8.00	542.40	8	8	8	2	1
Cell Phone Minutes	7	7.00	274.49	7	7	8	2	0
Clothing	3	3.00	381.12	3	3	3	1	1
Emergency Home Repair	1	1.00	89.00	1	1	1	2	0
Food	19	19.00	980.94	18	17	22	7	2
Fuel	18	18.00	518.09	18	18	24	22	1
Gas card	1	1.00	30.00	1	1	2	1	0
Insurance	3	3.00	237.96	2	2	4	2	0
Internet	2	2.00	557.86	2	2	3	2	0
Motel Vouchers-Homeless	125	232.00	22,698.56	89	88	120	34	8
Personal hygiene items	1	1.00	15.00	1	1	1	0	0
Rent Payment Assistance	38	39.00	8,659.00	37	38	59	23	0
Rental Deposit	5	5.00	769.13	5	5	5	5	0
Storage	6	6.00	804.67	6	6	11	2	0
Transportation	1	1.00	233.46	1	0	0	0	0
Utility Arrears	14	14.00	2,921.59	14	14	25	21	1
Utility Assistance	27	27.00	4,892.89	24	23	30	22	3
Organization Total:	296	404.00	\$54,013.31	207	205	289	138	14

Another Thrivent Action Team Comes Through Again!

Another Thrivent Action Team project was put together by the Horner Family of LSL last April. Food bags with survival items for a couple of days while clients are at the local motels. Even the baby had a part in this effort! Thanks Brian!

If YOU'd like to help with a food box collection or one for toiletries, (which we use all year long) - or even laundry/cleaning baskets (for our Christmas Wonderland Event), let us know! Laundry/cleaning basket information is listed in the article on page 8.



Cooling Center Program Initiated This Past Summer



For several years, our region's Emergency Weather Response (EWR) Team has operated and focused on warming centers during bitter cold winter weather. This summer they piloted a cooling center program for the first time! The pilot was restricted to St. Charles County and centers were located in three area churches.

The program operated from June through August on days in which an excessive heat advisory was announced and the temperature was expected to reach or exceed 100 degrees (or heat index) for 2 or more days. On activated days, the cooling centers were open from 1-5 p.m.

The activation announcement was made on the EWR hotline 636-344-0177 at 9:00 a.m. There was no transportation available for this program. For more information, contact Danielle Borunda at danielle@wentzvillecc.org or Tiffany Jackson at tjackson@communitycouncilstc.org.

In addition to the EWR program, other locations for cooling sites were offered through the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services however no transportation was available to these places either. Here is the link for that information for your future reference:

<https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/hyperthermia/index.php>

People needing to find other resources can always call 2-1-1 for more information.

Jim Donahue

New Caseworker for FSBH



Jim Donahue, from O'Fallon, Missouri, has recently joined FSBH as our new caseworker. He currently is assisting Paul in meeting the physical and spiritual needs of the homeless and fragile families who reach out to us for help. Jim has served in a pastoral role in churches for over 32 years and has a heart for finding ways to help people in any way he can.

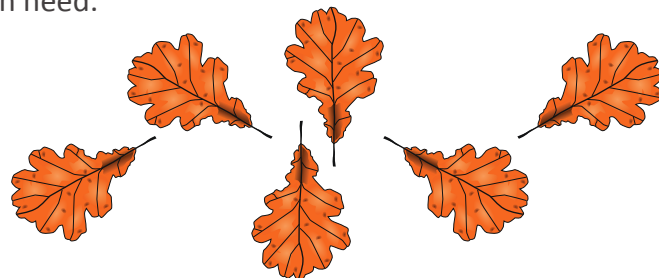
Jim states, "In the past few months I've been helping FSBH I have been awakened to the extent and overwhelming needs of those who are fighting for survival. I would have never imagined that upward of 30,000 people in St. Charles, Warren & Lincoln Counties are struggling with poverty matters. My heart has been blessed and broken at the same time."

For now, Jim works with Paul on a part-time basis, responding to the daily calls for assistance. He's also helping us get the awareness of our ministry out to other churches and organizations by meeting with key leaders in our region.

Jim is currently working through a process with his fellow pastors in West County, to start a new church in the St. Charles County area early in 2026. Outreach to those in need will be a key focus for this new congregation.

Jim and his wife Lisa have been married for 36 years and have three grown sons and six grandchildren.

In July Jim organized a food box collection at his church for parishioners to help by bringing in parts of our two-day survival food box items. Jim and Paul distribute these boxes daily as they interact with folks in need.



Survival Food Boxes Needed

Thanks to several church groups and others who have been willing to put together some Survival Food Boxes for clients. Since we can no longer serve meals at the local motels, it helps so much to have these ready-to-go food supplies on hand for our caseworkers to distribute as they interact with clients daily.

Putting together a few of these boxes is easy to do, and we so appreciate when folks make them. Perhaps YOU can organize a small group to put together some Survival Food Boxes. <https://firststepback-home.net/meal-calendar/>

We can provide you a tax receipt for your donations if requested. Just keep receipts and submit them to the Inventory Coordinator, Sue Miller (636-734-0855) when she picks up your boxes.



Our Inventory Coordinator will be happy to pick up your collection and she'll arrange for us to get them when we have clients in need.

Cars for Clients

Words from a grateful young mom after FSBH helped her acquire a 2011 Subaru: "You guys getting this car for me helped me so much because I didn't have help with rides very often and it was hard getting the baby back and forth from school and doctor appointments and same for my son. I can go grocery shopping and not have to wait days or weeks for my ride to show up. I appreciate it so very much." K.D. typically works cleaning houses and needed daily transportation to get to her assignments. We learned about her need from a business associate who works with Paul to acquire vehicles for fragile families.



And another client family was blessed by friends of FSBH with the provision of this 2009 Nissan thanks to the loving donation of ministry friends Ken and Michelle Strickland. Second photo is Ken with our caseworker Jim Donahue. Both of them have wives that went above and beyond! The car was Ken's wife's and she wanted the family of 6 to receive it along with a special extra gift since all this happened on B.B.'s birthday! God uses so many loving hearts to show His care and concern for others.



FSBH Caseworker Jim Donahue (R)
with donor Ken Strickland.



Happy client who actually got this
vehicle on her birthday!

FIRST STEP BACK HOME, INC.

Faith-Based, Christ Centered Christian Homeless Ministry 501(c)(3)
Public Charity www.firststepbackhome.net

Survival Food Box – Items Needed

(Each food box is designed to provide a 2-day supply of food for the homeless that we shelter in local motels. Sending “too much” will only result in waste if the person cannot transport any leftovers when they depart. For each box, please provide the following non-perishable items so that the boxes are complete & consistent.)

- ___ 1 Box of Breakfast bars or Granola bars (4 to 6 count)
- ___ 6 Tea Bags & 6 Coffee Bags (or small jar of instant coffee)
- ___ 4 Individual packets of Cocoa/Hot Chocolate
- ___ 1 Plastic Jar of Peanut Butter (16 oz size)
- ___ 1 Box of Club or Ritz crackers
- ___ 1 Plastic bottle of Apple Juice (48 oz size)
- ___ 4 Pull-top cans of Stew, Ckn & Dumplings, Chili, etc. (no cans requiring a can opener)
- ___ 1 Package of cookies
- ___ 1 Bag of Trail Mix (26oz) or Box of 8 Individual packets
- ___ 2 Individual bags of microwavable popcorn
- ___ 1 Small notebook or tablet with a writing pen
- ___ Optional – Card or Note of Encouragement

When the boxes are ready, please text or call
Sue Miller (Inventory Coordinator) at 636-734-0855

FSBH Inventory Coordinator will add the following items to the boxes:

- ___ 4 paper plates
- ___ 4 microwavable bowls
- ___ 4 Styrofoam cups (16oz size)
- ___ 4 sets of plastic ware (fork, spoon, knife & napkin)
- ___ 10 Sugar / Sweetener packets

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. (Matthew 25:35-36 NIV)

Bird's Eye View of a Client's Story

By Paul Kruse

L. C. called me from the hospital recently after being admitted for a severe diabetic condition. It was his discharge day and he had nowhere to go. He'd had a good job as a main maintenance foreman, but lost it because of his hospital stay.

We paid for two nights at the Economy Inn, Wentzville, so he would have enough time to get his job searches started.



The first night at the motel was tough. The temperature was over 90 degrees outside, and the a/c unit in his room broke down about 7 pm. It was 90 degrees in his room, too, and no air conditioning available. He called again for help. I called the owners and they tried to say they would fix it in the morning. I told them this guy just got out of the hospital and he could die in this hot, steamy room. So, after some extensive arguing, they relented and replaced the bad air conditioner that night. He slept well and began applying for jobs early the next morning.

His phone was not working well so we bought him a new one. Also he had no car so we gave him a bike. Soon he had several job offers because of his work experience.

Within a week, he found a good position using his mechanical skills. We paid for two weeks at the motel, so he would have enough time to get employment requirements fulfilled and earn his first paycheck.

Then he said he could pay for part of that week now and the rest later when he gets paid. We will trust him to do that, since he has done everything we asked him to, per our program.

He is not quite a Christian yet but is interested. Hopefully he will come around with more Christian teaching. He is already impressed that we Christians were the only ones to help him when his need was great. All we can do is pray that his plans work out and he can be self-supporting with his own car, good gainful job and good housing before too long. Thank You God, in Jesus' Name!

Mobile Home Project Ends with Happy Home Owner



The goal of providing permanent housing to the homeless through its Mobile Home Project was accomplished by the end of June 2025, when the final unit of eight initially owned by the ministry was gifted to its current resident. The final occupant Tom shed tears when the transaction was done, joyful to finally have his OWN home after all these years. He said no one has ever been so kind as the FSBH team who has lovingly guided and cared for him and his family over the past couple of years.

A total of 20,756 days of permanent housing was afforded during the ten years that FSBH launched its ownership of the units as a demonstration of affordable housing. With an average cost of \$21,250 per home, this was a great model for permanent housing and the most inexpensive method of ownership for our unhoused neighbors. A total of 73 people from 27 households lived in the units over the last decade. The ministry cost for these units was about \$170,000, resulting in only \$8.19 per day for this form of housing.

When it was determined last fall for FSBH to exit this program, it was planned for the current residents to receive the homes. Now most are happy home owners themselves, taking pride and great care to maintain their permanent housing



17th Annual Christmas Wonderland

Save the Date – December 20, 2025

Mark your calendars now for the FSBH 17th Annual Christmas Wonderland. This year we hope to serve 120 NEW families, as we did last year and the year before. There are always NEW families in need and will prioritize getting them signed up before any who have come in the past. Pass the word...and watch for registration details which will be posted on the FSBH Website in early October. The drive-thru church parking lot event will happen at the same location as in past years, Wentzville United Methodist Church. Registrations will be required for those seeking Christmas items, as well as for volunteers.

Christmas Wonderland Laundry /Cleaning Supplies Baskets

Now's the time to start collecting items for laundry baskets and other treats for the working poor and homeless from St. Charles, Lincoln and Warren Counties who will come to our 17th Annual Christmas Wonderland on Saturday, December 20, 2025. The event will once again be held at Wentzville United Methodist Church, 725 Wall Street, Wentzville, MO as a drive through event from 11 am – 2 pm.

Here's what to put into the baskets, so we have consistent "gifts" when distributing them. In the past several groups have made it a project to collectively gather items and then assemble them towards the end of the year. This list is also posted on our ministry website under "tangible assistance."

Please bring filled baskets to Wentzville United Methodist Church on Friday, Dec. 19 from 9 am – 3 pm or on Saturday, Dec. 20 from 9 – 10 am. Thanks for your consideration! For questions or further information contact Sue Miller at 636-734-0855.

FSBH Laundry/Cleaning Basket Suggested Contents

- Sturdy Basket
- Laundry Detergent
- Powdered Bleach
- Dryer Sheets
- Toilet Paper
- Window Cleaner
- Paper Towels
- Hand Soap/Bath Soap
- Dish Soap
- All-purpose Cleaner
- Dusting Spray
- Stain Remover
- Sponges
- Dish Towels
- \$5.00 in quarters (optional- for laundromat use)



Last year we had just enough filled baskets so each of the 120 families was able to receive one at the Christmas Wonderland. If you or a group you're a part of could make up one or two, it would be so very much appreciated! We can provide a tax-receipt for your donation.



Recent Donor Acknowledgments September 2025 Newsletter

We want to thank several businesses, churches and community groups who have financially supported FSBH during the first half of this year. Some donations have been made in honor or in memory of loved ones.

- **17,475 – St. Louis Community Foundation – Give STL Day- See Article on Page 3**
- **\$3,200 – Tammy Stratman Brown Charities**
- **\$2,700 – MasterCard – Match from employee gifts**
- **\$1,800 – Church of God Faith Fellowship, Grubville**
- **\$1,600 – Mary Martha Thrift Shop, Wentzville**
- **\$1,500 – Mission Financial- St. Peters**
- **\$1,200 – Element Church, Wentzville**
- **\$ 800 – Grace Community Chapel, St. Peters**
- **\$ 600 – Warrenton Christian Church**
- **\$ 564 - Marathon Petroleum – Match from employee gift**
- **\$ 500 – St. Louis Community Foundation – Give STL Day Prize**
- **\$ 197 - Thrivent Choice Dollars allocations from Dennis & Donna Hall, Diane Prange, and Brian Horner**
- **\$ 100 – Buck’s Ridge, LLC, Wentzville**
- **\$ 150 – Chapel of the Lake, Lake St. Louis**

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



Ways to Support First Step Back Home

We're so grateful for the many generous hearts who choose to support our mission. Your tax-deductible donation not only sustains our work—it brings real hope to those we serve. As a 501(c)(3) public charity, we provide receipts for all gifts to use for your tax documentation. Here are some meaningful ways you can give:

Corporate Matching Gift Programs

Many companies match employee donations or volunteer hours with financial gifts! Some known supporters include:

- Industrial Ally
- AT&T
- Wells Fargo
- Bayer
- Boeing
- Marathon Petroleum
- MasterCard
- Pfizer
- VMWare
- Thrivent Financial Services



For example, Boeing offers a \$250 donation when an employee volunteers 25 hours with us! If your employer offers a similar program, we're happy to complete any required paperwork.

By Check

You can mail a check payable to **First Step Back Home, Inc.** to:
Paul Kruse
PO Box 966
O'Fallon, MO 63366



Online Giving

Visit our website: www.firststepbackhome.net and click "Donate" to give securely via credit card through PayPal. Note: A small fee is deducted by PayPal.



Direct PayPal Link

You can also give directly using:
www.paypal.com/paypalme/firststepbackhome

Thrivent Members

Thrivent members can apply for two "Action Team" grants per year, receiving \$250 in seed money to support charitable causes like ours.



Learn more at: www.thrivent.com/actionteam

God's Spiritual Strength Within Us (Continued from Page 1)

By Paul Kruse

Finally

After studying these verses, we reaffirm that our hope and endurance comes from God! His spiritual strength sustains us through every challenge. By His promises, we are empowered in our strengths and weaknesses. We need to encourage one another in Love in our faith experiences, uplifting each other and reminding ourselves we can achieve great things with God leading us!

These verses can fuel our spirits and guide our hearts. Choosing to embrace God's strength means stepping into the abundant life He has created for us. With this in mind, we can rise above fear, doubts and anxieties. May we always find Hope, joy and perseverance in our faith walk, a strength that never fails!