

The Good Samaritan Society Temple Talk - 2008

As the congregational liaison representative for The Good Samaritan Society I'm pleased to be able to speak to you this morning on the Society's behalf.

The Good Samaritan Society continues to expand throughout Alberta and British Columbia. This growth is driven by our mission “...to extend Christian hospitality through a continuum of care to those in need or at risk, regardless of race or religious belief.” God has called us to serve those, who are often passed by: the frail elderly, the chronically ill, and people with developmental disabilities.

As a faith-based organization we seek to live out our values and give witness to our faith through our care. Our care is delivered in the Lutheran tradition of Christian hospitality. Historically in the early church, offering hospitality was a basic tenet of living out the Gospel. The church reached out to those who were on the fringes of society—the disenfranchised and the sick—and offered shelter and medical aid. The faith of the church was made visible through the establishment of hospitals and hospices. The Good Samaritan Society is rooted in this tradition of offering Christian hospitality.

The Good Samaritan Society came into being in 1949 with a donation of \$7,000 from Gottlieb Wedman, a committed Lutheran farmer who, driven by faith, had a dream for an “old folks home.” This seed money, and the volunteer help of many Lutheran congregations, brought about The Good Samaritan Society's first facility, an auxiliary hospital in Edmonton. Since then, The Good Samaritan Society has grown to become the largest faith-based health care organization in Canada with facilities and programs throughout Alberta and British Columbia.

This past year The Society provided care for more than 4,100 individuals. It employs over 3,600 full and part-time staff and has more than 1,400 volunteers. Last year, volunteers donated more than 75,000 hours serving clients and residents.

The Good Samaritan Society exists for the same reasons the church exists—to proclaim the Good News. As an organization, it has been called to proclaim the Word as revealed through the story of the Good Samaritan – to provide care for those whom it would be easy to pass by.

The Good Samaritan Society is indebted to the support of you, the Lutheran community. Your generosity through financial contributions and volunteer time greatly enhances The Society's ability to carry out its mission of extending Christian hospitality. Lutheran congregations regularly remember The Good Samaritan Society in prayer, visit residents and clients, lead worship services and organize special events.

Finally, we wish to invite you to consider becoming a member of The Good Samaritan Society. There are currently over 800 lifetime members of The Society. All members are invited to attend our annual General Meeting every September and learn about activities and future plans of The Society. Lutheran members have voting rights and can help set The Society's future direction and are eligible to be elected to the Board of Directors. The \$100 lifetime membership fee is directed to the Pastoral Care Endowment Fund. The interest earned in this Fund is used to fund the Pastoral Care Program. By becoming a member, you will strengthen the spiritual component of care which is so important to the well-being of our residents and clients.

Thank you for considering becoming part of The Good Samaritan family. I look forward to answering any questions you may have after the service.