

St. Charles Helping Hands Mission Statement- Updated June 2026

St. Charles Helping Hands was formed in December of 2014 prior to the passing of Elizabeth Jochem. Her daughter, Mary LaBadie, approached the parish council asking if she could form some sort of program that could focus on the senior citizens of St. Charles Parish. Throughout the years, we have seen our seniors at mass one week and then gone the next and nobody seemed to know of their whereabouts or if they had someone to take care of them, which we all found very frustrating. Not knowing what direction this would go, \$3000.00 was placed into the "Helping Hands" fund for things such as mailings, socials or whatever monetary needs that this group would need to serve our parish seniors.

Upon approval, the St. Charles bulletin was the most useful resource in asking for assistance. Jan. 17, 2015, our first "meeting" was held, and ideas were formed as to what we thought we might do. We met again in February and March and acquired a group of about 12 parish members who really wanted to focus on the needs of our church family seniors. In the past, there has never been a program such as this and there was a desperate need for one.

In May of 2015, with the help of our crew, we were able to acquire the names and phone numbers of most of our seniors over the age of 70. Upon speaking to them, we realized that unless they truly needed something, they were not in need of our help. So, we went on to the 80 and above age group and that is where we stand today. Our committee was able to obtain every parish member, 80 and above, and their contact information. Each month our committee gathers to make certain that our seniors are:

- A) Receiving proper care/ Do you have a family member to help?
- B) Receiving Holy Communion?
- C) Are they in need of some help with small chores?
- D) Do they have a friend to talk to or visit with?

Pat Lawrence in our parish office, sends each of them a birthday card and a get well wish if they are ill as well as "Thinking of You" cards. We send out a monthly/ bi-monthly newsletter with information on what has been going on or coming up within our church/school community, as well as community events they may be interested in attending. The newsletters also contain both religious information as well as jokes and totally senseless information. The birthdays of our seniors within those months are listed in the newsletter as well.

We host 3 socials per year in the form of a brunch in our church basement where 50-60 people were in attendance. Oak Park Place of Burlington aids in providing some of the food. Helping Hands volunteers prepare their favorite dishes to accompany the brunch and donate door prizes in the way of gift cards, flowers, etc. Coffee and other drinks are served by members which creates a fun and enjoyable environment for everyone, and people look forward to coming. We try to have a theme with our socials such as Luau,

Halloween, Thanksgiving and start the season off with either Easter or Derby Days. We are finding more and more participation as seniors are coming “dressed up” for the theme.

At one of our initial meetings, members formed a list of about 120 households of seniors in our parish who may like some help. We then divided our list among the 10 – 12 committee members and reached out to befriend or "buddy" with our significant seniors. We held bi-monthly meetings to discuss whatever needs there may be and made several deliveries to ALL homes in the form of floral arrangements, Easter Cards, Valentines made by the school children, holy water bottles and other trinkets. We go Christmas caroling when weather permits and join to sign Christmas cards for everyone.

Many have passed away, and many have been added; however, our mission remains the same. Our committee, past and present, are very proud to have been able to help so many seniors and their family members. We feel privileged to be able to thank our seniors for all they have done for our church. Our mission is to make certain they are properly cared for and can always rely upon a “Helping Hand” from St. Charles Parish as either a guide for resource information or simply a friend to talk to. Our seniors have given their lives to our church and deserve nothing but the best. With spiritual guidance and a little time, we feel as though our goals are being met and that our mission continues to be successful. Currently there are over 200 contacts for a total of nearly 250 seniors – not all of which are parish or tri-parish members as we try to reach widows/widowers who would like to socialize.

We find ourselves in a situation where it is even more important to keep in touch with others – parish members or not. Our committee strives to “team together” for the benefit of the whole. All of us have different useful resources which is what makes us so successful. We are not sponsored by the church financially; monetary donations are our only resource. Our funding has come in the form of bequests, private donations and the St. Charles Knights of Columbus.

Thank you for your time and please stay safe and healthy as our prayers are with you all. We will be calling those of you on our Helping Hands list just to check in or say hello. If you’d like to be added to our list, Let Mary know.

Please expect a phone call from one or more of the following committee members – as you can see, our volunteer list has grown throughout the years 😊

Mary LaBadie 206-5569 ~ Mary Pieters 763-2627 ~ Tom Lebak 763-6006 ~ Jackie Heiligenthal 661-4272 ~ Larry Dornacher 492-1510 ~ Pat Lawrence 757-3180 ~ Joan Zwiebel 763-9226 ~ Judy Halverson 758-0403 ~ Sandy and Al Lois – 989-6005 ~ Bridget Hinchliffe – (510) 508-5778 ~ Donna Harry – 262-930-3318 ~ Kelly Block ~ 210-1216 ~ Jackie Wuttke 492-1997 ~ Terry McCarthy 492-8790 ~ Elena Spiegelhoff 262- 930-9825 Kathy Emper 492-4980 ~ Tom Stenson – 492-3467.