



# Threshold Times

Volume 1, Issue 2  
Fall 2023

## Celebrating 10 Years of Ministry!

This year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> year of Threshold's Ministry. To mark this milestone, Leslie Raymer and volunteers threw a celebration cookout for guests of Threshold, members of DPC, and community supporters. More than 75 guests and 15 volunteers enjoyed hot dogs (prepared by Scott Overcarsh, Steering Committee member) and side dishes in the shade on the parking lot of Sycamore House.



Michael Turner, a housing specialist working with DeKalb County in 2023. Threshold holds an annual coat/blanket drive every fall to assist our unhoused guests during the winter months.

This ministry, established by then Associate Minister Ken Hughes, has had 4 directors, and has grown from seeing 208 guests its first year to more than 1000 visits a year in 2023. Over the course of our 10 plus year history, Threshold has developed rich relationships with First Baptist Church of Decatur (partnering to provide motel stays and other financial assistance), A Home for Everyone in DeKalb (partnering to provide rental and move in assistance), Decatur Emergency Assistance Ministry--DEAM (providing motel and rental assistance; collecting food supplies each year for DEAM), Revolution Doughnuts (free doughnuts for guests), and the Furniture Bank of Metro Atlanta. During the COVID19 crisis, Threshold altered our operations because of the pandemic, but importantly, we never closed. During this time, Threshold converted many services to virtual delivery, and added a dedicated phone line staffed by our Ministry Assistant Linda Huffine. In 2022, Threshold developed a partnership with Legal Aid of Atlanta (monthly in person clinic), and has begun sharing space with

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# DPC VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Barbara Morris



Originally from Boston, Massachusetts, Barbara Morris joined Decatur Presbyterian Church in 2015. Having retired from her career as a Records Specialist with PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLC, she is active at DPC, serving on the DPC Session, Sanctuary and Phone Guilds, and volunteering for Hagar's House and Threshold Ministry, living out her belief that "God is with us no matter the circumstance." Recently, Barbara organized six neighbors who are members of her Storytelling group at Phillips Towers to meet quarterly to assemble Hygiene Kits for Threshold. Many thanks to Barbara and the Storytellers! Here they are at their first gathering.



# COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Glenda Triemer



Glenda is a native of Pittsburg, Kansas, and came to Decatur in the fall of 2020 to be closer to her family. She retired from a career in Florida working for the Council on Aging and also had experience as a volunteer working with individuals with special needs. Glenda's hobbies include reading and volunteering. Glenda says volunteering brings her great joy, so in the summer of 2021 she began volunteering with Threshold Ministry. She is a member of Decatur First United Methodist church. Glenda serves as Threshold Ministry's mail specialist organizing mail files, adding new guests to the files, and maintaining a spreadsheet of active and inactive files in order to forward or return mail to senders as needed. What she enjoys most about her work with Threshold Ministry is learning about the lives of the people we touch and seeing the fellowship among our guests as they talk, laugh or enjoy a cup of coffee together when visiting. She also enjoys meeting other volunteers that give back to our community through serving at Threshold.

Why don't YOU consider joining Barbara and Glenda? For information about volunteering contact the church office or [lraymer@dpchurch.org](mailto:lraymer@dpchurch.org).

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# Guest Spotlight: Rosie Barber's Journey from Crisis to Community

In our ongoing series highlighting the incredible stories of resilience and compassion within our community, in this issue we are honored to feature Rosie Barber, a devoted volunteer at Threshold Ministry. Rosie graciously offered to share her personal journey, highlighting the challenges she faced and the invaluable support she received from Threshold during her time of need.



Originally from Meriwether County, Georgia, Rosie has called DeKalb County home for her adult life. However, circumstances took a difficult turn when she found herself at risk of losing her rental home. Rosie turned to Threshold Ministry in search of support. Little did she know that this encounter would not only change her life but also inspire her to become a shining example of compassion and service. Motivated by her own experience, Rosie discovered that she had a lot to offer others in need. She recognized the power of a warm smile and a helping hand, and she wanted to make a difference in the lives of her neighbors who were also facing homelessness or at risk of losing their homes. With an unwavering commitment to giving back, Rosie decided to become a volunteer at Threshold Ministry.

When asked about the housing crisis that contributed to her own situation, Rosie pointed to the rising costs of monthly rent as a major factor. With her fixed income from social security, it became increasingly challenging to keep pace with skyrocketing housing expenses. Luckily, Rosie found solace and support within the Threshold community. Threshold Ministry not only provided Rosie with financial assistance but also gave her something that cannot be quantified – hope. Through hospitality and unwavering belief in the dignity of every person, Threshold helped Rosie restore her faith in the power of community. With newfound strength and a smile on her face, Rosie now faces her housing challenges with a renewed sense of purpose and determination.

Reflecting on the impact of the support she received from Threshold, Rosie shared these heartfelt words: "I treat people with dignity because we are a community and we all deserve to be treated with dignity. I feel like a part of the Threshold community, and I am grateful."

Rosie's story is an inspiration to us all, reminding us of the resilience and strength that can be found within each of us, and the transformative power of reaching out and lending a helping hand. As Threshold Ministry continues to provide essential support to individuals and families facing housing crises, we invite you to join us in making a difference. Whether through volunteering, donation, or simply spreading the word about our mission, together we can ensure that everyone in our community has a safe and secure place to call home.

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## Work with our Partners

**What does the Lord  
require of you?**

**To do justice,  
and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly  
with your God.**

**-Micah 6:8**

**A “Supersized” Response:** During the month of July, Decatur Presbyterian Church was the “partner church” responsible for collecting needed food and hygiene items for the DEAM Pantry at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. DPC’s response was WONDERFUL!! Because of ALL the many items donated by individuals and families and the generous monetary donation given by the Cornerstone Class (Costco shopping!!), weekly trips were made to DEAM with “trunk” loads of donations. From hundreds of pounds of canned fruit, soup, chicken and tuna . . . to juice pouches and yellow rice. . . to hundreds of rolls of toilet paper, your loving and caring response to the needs of others helped to FILL the shelves at the DEAM Pantry. This year alone DEAM has provided over 65,000 pounds of food to more than 200 households. Without the weekly and monthly commitments of its “partner churches,” DEAM would not be able to provide weekly food assistance to these households. May the generosity of our congregation continue to serve the poor and the unhoused!



**A Home for Everyone in DeKalb** is partnering with Threshold Ministry to offer budget classes and help with applications for senior apartments and housing for people with disabilities. These sessions will take place in Sycamore House on the third Wednesday of each month. The collaboration has been approved by the Threshold Ministry Steering Committee.



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Annual Coat/Blanket Drive, September 24 – October 1:**  
Drop off at the Church anytime between September 24 and September 30, or “drive by” between Fellowship Hall and the playground after Church 10/1.
- **Community Meal**— watch for information about a Community Meal in early December.



There are so many ways that Threshold friends support the Threshold Ministry of Decatur Presbyterian Church. How many ways can Threshold Ministry say “THANK YOU” for your support?

1. When you volunteer during our open hours to serve our clients . . . “Grazie!”
2. When you stop by on a hot day with a carton of bottled water to share . . . “Merci!”
3. When you bring coats and blankets to our fall drive to keep folks warm . . . “¡Gracias!”
4. When you help guests apply for \_\_\_\_\_ . . . “Obrigado”
5. When a grieving family requests that “In lieu of flowers gifts be made to Threshold Ministry of Decatur Presbyterian Church” in memory of their loved one. . . “Words are simply inadequate to express our thanks.”

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## Recent Updates from the Threshold Steering Committee

### An Attitude of Gratitude — “Pass It On!”

“It only takes a spark to get a fire going;  
And soon all those around can warm up in its glowing;  
That’s how it is with God’s Love, once you’ve experienced it,  
You spread the love to everyone, you want to PASS IT ON!”\*

Being a part of the THRESHOLD MINISTRY at Decatur Presbyterian Church has awakened old memories of singing these words around campfires with youth groups in times long past, but the truths they speak are “fresh like spring.”

The stories of those who volunteer at Threshold and of those whose life situations have led them to Threshold’s doors, all express gratitude for their experiences of God’s love. They also share how that experience leads them to want to “pass it on” to others. Former Threshold guests become Threshold volunteers themselves and give back in wonderful ways to “Pass it on” and reach out to others and walk alongside them.

Those expressions of gratitude come in many forms to the Threshold Ministry, and each one is unique and special to those who “experience it.”

We love because God first loved us . . .

\*Pass It On” by Kurt Kaiser, The United Methodist Hymnal, No. 572

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## Welcome New Threshold Intern: Marlene White



We welcome Marlene White as she begins a year of service as a Master's of Social Work intern at Threshold Ministry. Marlene is currently enrolled in the University of Central Florida Master of Social Work (MSW) Program and is working to complete her Masters of Social Work degree. As part of her education requirement, she will serve as an MSW intern at the DPC Threshold Ministry for twelve months, beginning August 28th, 2023.

Marlene brings a wealth of experience to assist Threshold in our ministry with our unhoused neighbors in Decatur and those who are at risk of losing their housing. Marlene will provide social service counselling services to Threshold guests which will begin with initial interviews and assessments of their wants and needs. She will then work with Threshold staff/volunteers to assist our guests in finding affordable housing options, and connecting them to resources which can help them reach their goals.

Marlene relocated to Georgia 25 years ago. Marlene is a native New Yorker but considers herself a peachy - apple because of how long she has called Georgia home. Marlene lives in Decatur and is the proud parent of two daughters and has one grandchild. Marlene holds a master's degree in education with a specialization in enrollment management and, for over three decades, has coupled the experience of her life's journey with her professional knowledge to offer culturally sensitive, quality direct services to marginalized groups.

For over two decades, Marlene has provided services to at-risk individuals and families on the teams of the Women's Resource Center to End Domestic Violence, International Women's House, the DeKalb County Community Services Board, and the DeKalb County Public Library. In 2007, Marlene began service as a volunteer at Hagar's House, the emergency shelter of Decatur Cooperative Ministry (DCM). Over the past fifteen years, Marlene has served in various capacities at DCM and currently serves in executive leadership. Marlene fondly recalls meeting Cheryl Sullivan, Catherine Carter, and many other Decatur Presbyterian Church members as they volunteered at DCM.

Marlene will work with Threshold on Tuesdays and Thursdays, initially with guests who have received ARP funds. Please join us in welcoming Marlene to Threshold Ministry.

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## Pastor's Ponderings



Over the last decade, the session of Decatur Presbyterian Church (DPC) has intentionally sought to balance a strong inward focus – e.g., caring for one another and nurturing one another in the family of faith – with a stronger outward focus on our community. One of the scripture texts that informed this balance is from the prophet Jeremiah: *Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare... For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. (29:7,11)*

When one of our former Associate Pastors, Ken Hughes, recognized the need to formalize our assistance ministry, we initiated Threshold Ministry in 2013. This ministry, which now employs two part-time staff and many volunteers, exists as a direct response to the constant human needs at our doorstep. Hospitality is one of the touchstones of our Threshold Ministry, welcoming people in the name of Jesus Christ, listening to their needs, and offering a bag lunch or cup of hot coffee on a cold day. While we provide a number of direct services – like Marta cards for doctor appointments or work needs, some direct assistance for rent and utilities, cheap phones in order to connect to services - our primary goal has always been to come alongside individuals and help them navigate the disparate and sometimes chaotic service provider system. We often have Threshold guests worship with us or participate in Wednesday night suppers.

For many years, DPC sat “fortress-like” at the corner of Church and Sycamore Streets in the middle of downtown Decatur, not intimately connected to its neighborhood. Today, our congregation is known as a church that cares about its neighborhood and continually invites our neighbors not only to join with us in worship, but also to participate in everything from youth group to service projects to events like Blessing of the Pets or Trunk-n-Treat. The post-pandemic Church has its challenges, but a congregation that intentionally seeks the welfare of its surrounding community will ultimately find itself “filled full,” full of the fruits of the Holy Spirit – *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, and self-control*. By God’s grace, may these gifts be yours and yours to share.

Rev. Dr. Todd Speed, Senior Pastor

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