



St. Matthew's House®

VOL. 9 • ISSUE 2 • FEBRUARY 2026

Thank You for Helping
to Make All Things New

Jail Chaplaincy Brings “Hope to the Hopeless”

Your support does a great deal to feed, clothe, and shelter our neighbors in need. It also allows us to serve those who are incarcerated.

Our Jail Chaplaincy offers compassionate care, counseling, and religious services to incarcerated individuals in Collier County and Hendry County jails. Eric Hausler, a full-time pastor, is Head Chaplain at Collier County Jail, as well as Jail Chaplain for St. Matthew’s House. His wife, Donna, serves as Chaplain Office Administrator, and works in a pastoral way with the women inmates.

“I’d prayed to mentor young women, and I’m doing that now,” Donna says. “I listen to them reflect back, and pray with them.”

According to Eric, there are, on average, 950 inmates in Collier and Hendry Counties at any given time, the majority of them men. Services provided include collection and distribution of donated Bibles and reading glasses, weekly Bible studies, and one-on-one ministry – the heart of Eric and Donna’s calling.

Eric says most are looking for encouragement and hope. “I’ll listen to their needs, listen to their prayer requests, read the Scriptures, pray for them, and encourage them to look to the Lord and pray for God’s favor and blessing, that God would use this for good and give them wisdom.”

These meetings often plant a seed that grows and transforms inmates, many of whom have struggled with addiction of some kind. “We see a lot of success stories,” Eric says. “We go to the Justin’s Place graduations and see people we knew from jail walking across the stage.” Donna adds, “There’s so much joy to know they’re taking steps to follow the Lord and leave that old life behind.”

Eric and Donna feel deeply blessed to carry out our Lord’s commission to visit and minister to the incarcerated. Eric says, “We get an opportunity to give hope to the hopeless, and we have seen a lot of people whose lives have been changed and who are now productive members of the community.”



New Beginnings Celebrated Here!

Everybody loves a celebration, and there are plenty of reasons to celebrate at St. Matthew's House. Our baptisms, graduations, and cross ceremonies are all joyous occasions to recognize how far our Justin's Place® residents have come and to encourage them along their journey.

Jeff McDowell, Senior Director of our Justin's Place Recovery Program, tells us that journey begins when an individual is ready to own the crisis that brought them to St. Matthew's House. Over the course of 12 months, they establish healthy relationships, align themselves with a higher power, and eventually move from crisis to contributor.

Along the way, many residents turn their lives over to Jesus Christ and make their commitment public with a baptism. Jeff says, "It's a chance to bury the old self, symbolically, and resurrect it to walk in the newness of life. It's beautiful, especially around Easter. It's a new beginning."

The biggest event is graduation, held three times a year. "It's not the end of their recovery, but a milestone," Jeff says. "It's a beautiful time when donors, board members, friends, family, other current program members, and alumni all come together and really have a big celebration."

During the cross ceremony, alumni, many now living in transitional housing, come together to nail their names to a large cross. "It represents the old person," Jeff explains, "now walking in the newness of life after giving it all to the Lord."

Observed within a two-week period, our graduations, cross ceremony and baptisms help residents prepare for stable lives in the community. "We encourage one another, challenge one another, spur each other on in love and good deeds, and meet together as a body of believers," Jeff says, referencing Hebrews 10:24-25. "It's a new way of looking at life."

Our next Justin's Place graduation will be held on March 19 at Covenant Church of Naples. Watch our website and social media for details.

Some Recent Grads Speak Out

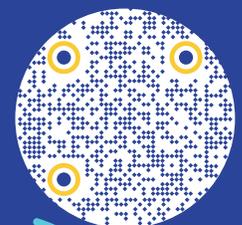
I'm looking forward to what God's got for me. I'm hoping to get married and have an actual life. The one I had before wasn't much, so I'm grateful for St. Matthew's House.
- Cameron



St. Matthew's House helped me to form a new identity in Christ instead of one that was based on my trauma and trying to survive. Thank you so much for changing my life.
- Mackenzie



If you would like to see and hear from all our November 6, 2025, graduates, scan this QR code with your smartphone camera.



You Help Make All Things New

Dear Friend,

Many friends from the north come to Naples to escape the snow. But there's one good thing about winter in a cold climate, and that's the return of spring. In a beautiful way, it mirrors the Easter story, when new life triumphs over death.



BEN BRIDGES
President & CEO

Here in Naples, of course, it's warm year round. And at St. Matthew's House, lives are made new not just at Easter, but every day. Your support gives our neighbors in crisis a chance to restore their hope, reclaim their dignity, and renew their relationships with God, their families, and our community.

Some hurting people encounter the Lord for the first time at St. Matthew's House. His grace and mercy are revealed through the care and compassion you help provide. Others experience a renewal of faith, rediscovering the depth of the Father's love for them.

These life transformations are nothing short of miraculous, reminding us that Christ opened the door to new life – eternal life – for everyone. Further, this act of restoration helps to end homelessness in our community, one precious life at a time.

I wish you a very joyful Easter season. Until then, please remember our residents in your prayers and rejoice with them as they experience new life in Christ!

Sincerely,

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ...

– 1 PETER 1:3



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Facebook facebook.com/stmatthewshouse

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Check Out Our Social Enterprises!

Social enterprise profits defray administrative costs, so philanthropic donations reach those in need.

LuLu's KITCHEN

RESTAURANT & EVENTS

LuLu's Kitchen is our 8,000-square-foot, free-standing facility that is home to a full-service restaurant and more.
visitlulus.com | (239) 774-5858

delicious by design

CATERING

Delicious By Design provides food and service by an award-winning professional catering team for receptions, weddings, dinners, themed buffets and luncheons.
deliciousbydesign.org | (239) 298-5028

St. Matthew's House®

THRIFT STORE

St. Matthew's House Thrift Stores offer high-quality, gently used furnishings, decor, clothing and other goods in five convenient locations.
(239) 774-0500