



Update:
St. Francis of Assisi School
Cerca-la-Source, Haiti

Dear St. Stephen Family,

In 2004, the Parish of St. Stephen founded the Holding Hands with Haiti Ministry (HHH) to assist St. Francis of Assisi (St. Francis) Parish and School in Cerca-la-Source, Haiti. The ministry was formed in conjunction with the Parish Twinning Program of The Americas, a non-profit that created sister-parish relationships between U.S. parishes and those in Haiti and other South American countries.

Over the years, our support has helped to build a community center; deliver and install a commercial generator; provide school supplies; and set up a learning lab with computers, printer, copy machine and office equipment. Most importantly, our donations helped fund monthly salaries for teachers and support staff and a hot meal for the students each day—possibly their only meal. Several St. Stephen parishioners have traveled on three occasions to visit St. Francis Parish and School, leaving a profound imprint on the hearts of our brothers and sisters in Cerca-la-Source, as well as our own parishioners.

However, the situation in Haiti has become extremely difficult as the country has been plagued by natural disasters, ongoing political corruption, Covid-19, and a collapsed economy. Cerca-la-Source, in particular, is a remote and impoverished community that has been especially hard hit by these difficulties. Over the past few years, donations from St. Stephen began to wane, and so did enrollment at St. Francis as operating expenses could not be met.

In 2021, the new pastor of St. Francis, Fr. Frantz Baptiste, reached out to St. Stephen's for help. A committee was reformed at St. Stephen with a goal of raising enough money to help Fr. Frantz fund teacher and staff salaries, numbering 40 people. The target was \$21,000 to pay teachers for the '21-22 school year. The appeal was launched at Masses in April 2022. Gifts and pledges totaled \$55,890, which covered our initial goal as well as teacher salaries for the '22-'23 school year. **MANY THANKS** to all who opened their hearts and generously responded to this appeal!

Looking ahead to the '23-24 school year, we would like to increase our pledge amount to \$25,000 to allow even more children in Cerca-la-Source to have access to a high-quality, Christ-centered, Catholic education. In addition to helping fund teacher and staff salaries, our donations will help ensure that each child has at least one hot meal a day, and provide tuition assistance to those in need.



One day we hope to resume in-person visits to Cerca-la-Source, but for now we can continue to show our love for and solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Haiti through our prayers and financial support. Please prayerfully consider making a donation to the HHH ministry. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of these children, and help build a brighter future for them, their families, and all of Haiti.

God Bless,
Holding Hands with Hait Committee

For more information or questions about the HHH ministry please contact Fr. Scott (frnolan@ststephenparish.com) or Hank Milanowski (hjmilo@comcast.net). Pledge cards are available in the pews or on the HHH table in the narthex and can be returned to the parish office. Donations can also be made by going online to www.ststephenparish.com/donate and entering your pledge amount under "Haiti Ministry."

Holding Hands with Hait Committee Members: •

Fr. Scott • Earl Burhans • Marion Burns • Donna Francisco • Dan Fredricks • Isabel Hollern • Hank & Diane Milanowski • Larry Mulligan • Nancy Mulvihill • Elizabeth Murray • Paul Solberg • Fred Vipond • Jay & Mary Wisentaner • Dave Wollet

