God's Bathhouse brings showers to Volusia's homeless

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On any given Monday you will find them gathered in the parking lot of First United Methodist Church on Douglas Street in New Smyrna Beach.

Some come by foot, some come by bike. Some come in cars that are on their last mile. Nevertheless, they find a way to get there. The promise of a hot shower, with the luxury of soap, shampoo, a clean towel and a fresh razor is too good to pass up — even if it is in a refitted truck.

For many, this may be the only shower they get all week, most likely longer. Homeless shelters are few and far between in Volusia County, and New Smyrna Beach doesn't have one at all. So when Elgia Glass had the idea to create a mobile shower station to give the homeless an opportunity to shower, he knew there was a need.

After surviving prostate cancer, Glass felt a nudging from God.

"I was thanking God and He said, 'Now what are you going to do for somebody else, pass the blessing on.' So I saw homeless people and I said, 'They need a bath,' and it just stuck," said Glass.

A retired maintenance director for Coronado Community United Methodist Church in New Smyrna Beach, Glass and his wife, Elizabeth, had few financial resources to help this vision become a reality. But Glass couldn't let it go, and Elizabeth became just as passionate about the bathhouse so she went to work organizing a fundraiser.

After successfully raising $6,500, Glass looked at dozens of trucks for sale. He eventually found the perfect truck — so

See SHOWER, D0

From left, Elgia and Elizabeth Glass sort through donated clothes. Each homeless person gets a clean pair of clothes after they shower at God's Bathhouse. [NEWS-JOURNAL/KELLI ABERNETHY]

Leroy Lovett helps adjust the shirt collar of Wayne Tafford after Tafford used the showers in the truck. The bathhouse is at the First United Methodist Church in New Smyrna Beach every Monday. [NEWS-JOURNAL/KELLI ABERNETHY]
The power of a shower

From left, Elgia and Elizabeth Glass in front of God's Bathhouse. Since March, they have provided over 250 showers for homeless residents of New Smyrna Beach and Deland. (NEWS-JOURNAL/KELLIE ABERNETHY)
SHOWER

Continued from 2:

Two new showers, two
two new showers, two

The first and last

First and last

Last and first

First and last