



Christmas at Sea



THE  
SEAMEN'S  
CHURCH  
INSTITUTE

# THE KNIT

*before Christmas*

Winter 2025

## Investing in SCI's mission-driven work on behalf of mariners and seafarers

SCI upholds our enduring legacy of serving and protecting the personal and professional lives of mariners with unwavering compassion and dedication. We are committed to partnering with the maritime industry to ensure dignity within the workplace, and the safety of vessel operations and maritime environments. Through our efforts, we strive to foster a safer, more respectful, and sustainable maritime community, both internationally and domestically.

Our core values are **compassion, dependability, and integrity.**

## THE KNIT *before Christmas*

Winter 2025

*The Knit Before Christmas* is a publication of the Seamen's Church Institute.

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### Editorial

Mark K. Knoy  
*Chair, Board of Trustees*

The Rev. Mark S. Nestlehutt  
*President & Executive Director*

Joanne Bartosik  
*Senior Manager, Development & Christmas at Sea*

Naomi Walker  
*Managing Editor*

Tina Bliss  
*Designer*



# Winter 2025 KNIT NOTES

I'd like to dedicate this issue of *The Knit Before Christmas* to the more than 1,000 individuals and groups who, through their behind-the-scenes work, make *Christmas at Sea* (CAS) possible and contribute to the continuing success and growth of this special program.

The anchor of CAS is the dedicated group of fiber artists from across the country and beyond who create stunning warm apparel, and tailor drawstring ditty bags. This year we were wowed by the number of seamstresses who added impressive design elements, such as cross stitches and appliques, to ditty bags.

Not all volunteers knit, crochet, or sew. We receive hundreds of holiday greeting cards with personal, handwritten, heartfelt messages, many made by schoolchildren. There are volunteers who focus their efforts on collecting toiletries and nonperishable snacks, and we would be hard-pressed to deliver anything without the assistance of packing groups.

Ministry on the River (MOR) Chaplains and Chaplain Associates coordinate the operation along seemingly endless miles of U.S. inland waterways. In Port Newark, SCI Chaplains and Chaplain Associates keep the SCI fleet vehicles filled with Santa Sacks for delivery during ship visits starting in December and continuing into January.

I would be remiss if I didn't give a boisterous, technicolor shout-out to SCI colleagues who, without exception, are eager to pitch in and are ready to help.

Accolades to you; volunteers, staff, trustees, and friends, who support CAS in all sorts of ways. It's difficult to come up with adequate words to describe how much your involvement means. Your efforts make a tangible difference. Thank you!

With gratitude,

Joanne Bartosik  
Senior Manager of Development & Christmas at Sea

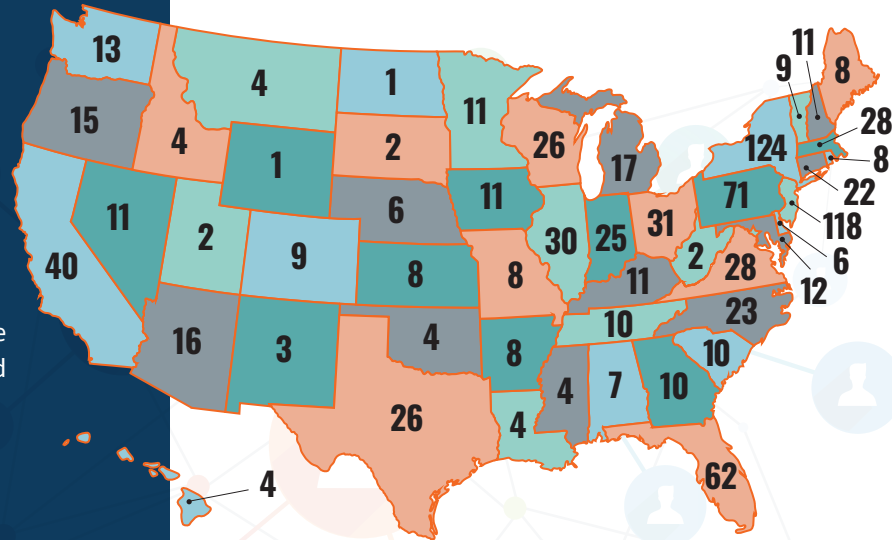
ABOVE: CAS volunteer **Robin Marko** (left) and **SCI Chaplain Michelle McWilliams** (center) work alongside **Joanne Bartosik** (right). Robin, well into her fourth year of volunteering, processes donations. Michelle is indispensable in preparing shipments for CAS on the River, and in her role as Chaplain, delivering gift bags to ships in Port Newark.

## CAS By The Numbers

### Total number of donations:

- Knits/crochets/ditty bags – **27,833**
- Number of knits/crochets donated – **22,942**
- Number of ditty bags donated – **4,891**
- Number of CAS volunteers (individuals) – **780**
- Number of new individual volunteers for 2024 – **147**
- Number of CAS Groups – **150**
- Number of new CAS Groups for 2024 – **34**

### Number of volunteers from each state:



### Names and states of the top 3 individual volunteers\*:

- Helga K., NC – **678**
- Loretta Z., TX – **596**
- Judy H., NY – **413**

### Names, cities, and states of the top 3 groups\*:

- Episcopal Diocese of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, WI – **460**
- Saint Ann's Episcopal Church, Old Lyme, CT – **392**
- The Church of St. Mark and All Saints, Galloway, NJ – **372**

\* (defined by the total # of knits/crochets & ditty bags)

### Volunteers abroad:

- Belgium, Italy, and the U.K.

### Port Newark:

- **4,721** ditties delivered to **185** vessels between December 2, 2024 and January 6, 2025.

### CAS on the River:

- **12,295** knits/crochets delivered along inland waterways for mariners.



# A huge THANK YOU to our packing group volunteers 2024...

- Jeffrey and Felicity Affortunato
- Calvary Episcopal Church, Flemington, NJ
- Christ Episcopal Church, Glendale, OH
- Council on Port Performance, Workforce Development Implementation Team
- East Coast Warehouse
- Edie Klink & Maggi Husar, Seaside Park, NJ
- Green Marine
- Hapag-Lloyd
- Maher Terminals
- ONE, Ocean Network Express
- New York Navy League
- Notre Dame High School, East Stroudsburg, PA
- Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, Business Development & Industry Relations Group and Operations
- Port Newark Container Terminal (PNCT) & Ports America
- Elsa Botne, Joanne Filocamo, Turid Ostensen, & Regina Refstie, Staten Island, NY
- San Jacinto College, Maritime Campus
- Veronica Stanford, Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce
- St. David's Episcopal Church, Cranbury, NJ
- St. John's Episcopal Church, Little Silver, NJ
- SUNY (State University of New York) Maritime Cadets
- TowWorks
- Trinity Church, New York City
- Trinity Episcopal Church, Cranford, NJ
- Trinity Episcopal Church, Vicksburg, MS
- United States Coast Guard, SEC New York
- United States Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) Cadets
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection
- The Woman's Club of Morristown, NJ
- Women's International Shipping & Trading Association (WISTA CT, NJ, NY)

## And a shout-out to the...

Shipping Association of New York and New Jersey for providing toiletries and nonperishable snacks in support of Port Packing Week.

To see all the photos of our fantastic 2024 volunteer packing groups, visit [seamenschurch.org/pics-cas](https://seamenschurch.org/pics-cas) or scan the QR code!



# Mariner Thank- Yous

“We want to thank all the people who took time to knit these wonderful gifts!! They’re sure keeping our heads warm!!”



Good day,

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you from Master and entire crew of *Hafnia Australia*. Many thanks for all the gifts, our crew are very happy!

Best regards,  
Capt. Konrad Jaroszynski  
Master of *Hafnia Australia*

Dear Seamen’s Church Institute—good day!  
Please let me share my kind appreciation for the gifts provided to the crew members of MT *Sunny Lakes*.  
Thank you!

On behalf of all or our crew members on the M/T *Sunny Lakes*, I am sending heartfelt wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2025!!!

May the spirit of Christmas bring peace and happiness to your heart and home and may 2025 bring you success and prosperity.

Best regards,  
Capt. Aleksandr Diakov  
Master of M/T *Sunny Lakes*

## Plus, a belated thank you for our gifts from last year!

Dear SCI Team,  
Good day. I, Capt. Somcio, on behalf of my crew, would like to send our warm greetings and thanks for choosing us to be one of the recipients of gifts from your organization.

We hope that your organization and all your volunteers prosper this year and beyond, with a big smile and good health as always. Attached is a photo onboard of crew wearing the handmade hats and scarves as a sign of appreciation for all your efforts to help all those onboard. Your gifts remind them that they’re not being taken for granted.

We thank you so much.  
Respectfully yours,  
Capt. Somcio  
Crew / MV *Hutton*





118 Export Street,  
Port Newark, NJ 07114

## The Roper Legacy Society: Supporting Mariners

The **Roper Legacy Society** acknowledges the thoughtful generosity and foresight of those individuals who have included the Seamen's Church Institute in their estate plans. We would like to celebrate the current members of the Roper Legacy Society—thank you!

- Mrs. Norma J. Agatstein
- Mr. and Mrs. George D. Benjamin\*
- Ms. Anne D. Bihlmeyer\*
- Mrs. Barbara Y. Bodden
- Mrs. Gale Rundquist Chen
- Janice C. Coleman and Richard G. Allgaier
- Mrs. Edith H. DeVoe\*
- Ms. Marjorie Dovman
- Mr. and Mrs. Richard T. du Moulin
- Estate of Almond M. Paine
- Estate of Charles F. Pope
- Estate of Charles S. Keene
- Estate of Edward W. Conklin
- Estate of Eleanor Monaghan
- Estate of Enid Storm Dwyer
- Estate of Estelle A. Manning
- Estate of George P. Lumsden
- Estate of Kate B. Sheadle
- Estate of Kathe W. Dolan
- Estate of Marcia W. Moore
- Estate of Sarah Decoux
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- Bruce G. Paulsen, Esq.
- Dr. Craig E. Philip and Ms. Marian Ott
- Mr. Edward Shearer
- The Rev. Dr. and Mrs. James R. Whittemore\*
- Mr. James L. Wilson\*
- Mr. Carlyle Windley\*

*\*Deceased*

Through their planned gifts, Roper Legacy Society members enable SCI to continue to meet the needs of mariners through pastoral care, continuing education and training, and advocacy.

If you would like more information, or to join the Roper Legacy Society today, email Amy Mugavero, Director, Advancement & Strategic Initiatives, at [amugavero@seamenschurch.org](mailto:amugavero@seamenschurch.org) or call **212.349.9090**.



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