

Winter Emergency Shelter Frequently Asked Questions (updated January 21, 2025)

1. Where is the shelter?

The Winter Emergency Shelter is located in the Shetler Building on the corner of Elm and Fisher.

2. How do I get into the shelter?

Park in the lower level of the parking deck (the first entrance off on the right after Elm). The entrance to the Winter Emergency Shelter is behind the trash and recycling dumpsters and is accessed using the keypad with the church code. If you do not have the code, simply knock on the door and someone will let you in. Please see the FPC Campus Map for a visual.

3. How accessible is the shelter?

There is a small step from the parking deck into the Winter Emergency Shelter. The sleeping area, dining area, kitchen, and bathrooms are all on the same level. To get to the showers, there is 5-minute walk through the church and down a flight of stairs. Because of the stairs down to the showers, the shelter guests must be able to navigate stairs.

4. Who is working at the shelter?

The Winter Emergency Shelter is staffed by Greensboro Urban Ministry. Two site coordinators oversee the shelter operations and staff. Night managers have been hired by Greensboro Urban Ministry to spend the night at the shelter. Additionally, guests have been assigned case managers at Greensboro Urban Ministry who will spend time each week working with the guests at the shelter. Finally, the entire Winter Emergency Shelter program across the four churches is being managed by a program coordinator. In addition to the Greensboro Urban Ministry staff, volunteers provide valuable support for the guests.

5. What are the volunteer opportunities at the shelter?

We have three different opportunities for people to volunteer at the Winter Emergency Shelter: meal volunteers, evening volunteers, and overnight volunteers.

6. How do I sign up to volunteer?

We have an online sign-up page for each volunteer opportunity. Use the links below to sign up:

[Meal Volunteer](#)

[Evening Volunteers](#)

[Overnight Volunteers](#)

7. I am not connected to First Presbyterian Church, may I volunteer?

Yes! We welcome all volunteers who have a heart for caring for our unhoused neighbors!

MEAL VOLUNTEERS

8. What do meal volunteers do?

Meal volunteers bring a meal for the guests, staff, and volunteers, totaling around 20 meals. They bring the meal around 6pm and have it set up by 6:15pm. They help serve the meal to the guests and volunteers and then join in sharing the meal with everyone.

9. What do I need to bring with the meal?

Please bring a main dish with some sort of protein along with sides including a grain and vegetables.

10. Are there dietary restrictions for the guests?

There is at least one guest who is a vegetarian and another who is allergic to eggs. Please clearly label everything that contains meat products and eggs.

11. Do I need to bring plates, cups, flatware, bowls, or napkins?

No. We have all those supplies at the shelter. Additionally, we have serving utensils available in the kitchen.

12. Do I need to bring a drink for the guests?

It would be greatly appreciated by the guests if you brought something for them to drink. There is water, coffee, and tea at the shelter, but guests appreciate some variety. Also, there is ice available if needed (either from the freezer in the kitchen or from the church ice maker in the Life Center).

13. Is there a way to heat up the food?

The shelter has small microwave suitable for heating individual plates but not entire meals.

14. How is the meal served?

There is a table in the dining room on which the meal will be set up. Buffet style serving is the most effective for serving a group this size. Please set the plates at the start, and then arrange the meal items in a row so people can take what they would like. Please know that the guests will eat when they choose. Some may decide to rest for a while or take a shower before eating. Also, some of the guests will not arrive until after the meal volunteers have left. The important this is that the meal is ready and available so they can eat when they are ready.

15. What do I do with leftover food?

Check with the Greensboro Urban Ministry staff to see how many guests still need to eat at the end of your time serving the meal. It is likely that some, or even most, of the men will not have eaten by 7pm so individual plates will be prepared and left for the guests. Leftovers may also be left in the refrigerator but will be disposed of after two days.

16. How long should I be there?

Please plan on arriving around 6pm and wrapping up and heading out of the shelter around 7pm.

EVENING VOLUNTEERS

17. What do evening volunteers do?

There are two shifts for evening volunteers: 6pm to 9pm and 9pm to midnight. The 6pm shift is responsible for helping the staff with checking guests in, setting up and serving the meal, and then taking the guests to and from the shower area. The 9pm shift is responsible for cleaning the towels and helping the guests get settled for the night.

18. How do we get to the showers from the shelter?

To get to the showers from the shelter, guests and volunteers will go through the back of the Life Center, through Redhead Hall, and down the stairs on the other side of the chapel to the shower area by the Scout Room. There are signs up to help navigate the path.

19. I am unable to navigate steps, can I still help as an evening volunteer?

Yes! Volunteers are needed in the shelter while some of the guests are showering.

20. What do I do while waiting in the shower area or in the shelter with the guests?

Connect with the guests. Part of the joy of hosting the Winter Emergency Shelter is building relationships with our guests. Talk to them; get to know them. There will be down times when not a lot is happening in the shelter, use that time to relax and connect with the guests. There will be other times when the staff will need assistance, and volunteers will be asked to help out.

21. Where is the laundry?

The laundry is behind the kitchen in the Mullin Life Center on the second floor. It is immediately beside the elevator.

22. When should I be at the shelter?

Please try to be at the shelter at the start of your shift (6pm or 9pm). We have found that we do not need volunteers to arrive before the start of their shift.

OVERNIGHT VOLUNTEER

23. What does an overnight volunteer do?

The overnight volunteers spends the night with the guests and overnight staff. They are there to help get the guests settled at night and help get them up in the morning.

24. Do I have to stay up all night?

No. There is a cot for the overnight volunteers so they can get some sleep. This cot will be

placed in the hallway by StepUp to help make sure guests do not wander in the building.

25. What is the morning routine?

Wake-up time is at 5am. The overnight volunteer will get coffee going and breakfast items out for the guests to either eat in the dining area or grab and go. The guests will leave the shelter by 6am.

26. What will the guests eat for breakfast?

A continental style breakfast of fruit, cereal, toast, yogurt, etc. will be available for guests.

OTHER QUESTIONS

27. What if there are guests outside before Greensboro Urban Ministry staff arrive?

Please do not open the Winter Emergency Shelter without staff from Greensboro Urban Ministry. If there is not a staff member present when the shelter should be opening at 6pm, please contact one of the Site Coordinators: Anthony Walker (336-690-1938) or Fanta Dorley (336-493-5622).

28. What support is Greensboro Urban Ministry providing for the shelter?

Greensboro Urban Ministry is providing the staffing for the shelter along with case management for each guest.

29. How long will First Presbyterian Church be operating the shelter?

The Winter Emergency Shelter will run through March 31, 2025.

30. Who determines who spends the night at the shelter?

Greensboro Urban Ministry has selected each guest to stay at the church. They have screened the residents of Weaver House and chosen the residents who are most able to succeed in a Winter Emergency Shelter. People interested in staying at the shelter must go through Greensboro Urban Ministry.

31. How is the Winter Emergency Shelter being funded?

The City of Greensboro approved \$425,000 for Winter Emergency Shelter. Those funds go to Greensboro Urban Ministry who is facilitating the program. In turn, each of the four churches hosting Winter Emergency Shelters has an agreement with Greensboro Urban Ministry and is being compensated for the use of the space.

32. I have more questions, whom do I contact?

Please contact Matt Bussell, Associate Pastor for Outreach and Mission, at mbussell@fpcgreensboro.org with any questions.