

The Courier

Vol .73, No 12

December 2023

First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)

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www.bellinghamdisciples.org
[Find us on Facebook](#)



We are an Open and Affirming Congregation. We welcome and celebrate all people inclusive of their gender and sexuality. All are welcome here at the Table of our Lord.

We are a Green Chalice Certified Congregation connecting our Christian faith, spiritual Practice and creation consciousness to demonstrate the fullness of God's shalom.

We acknowledge that we gather on the ancestral land of the Coast Salish peoples. Including the Lummi, Nooksack, and Semiahmoo who were displaced by our Euro American ancestors as part of the westward push for colonization. May we live respectfully, honoring our Coast Salish neighbors,

Longest Night Service

on Winter Solstice, Thursday, December 21st.

Outside in the courtyard around the Schmidlings fire pit,



7:00 p.m. Dress warmly, Bring a folding chair and blanket.



Hot beverages provided.



Christmas Eve Service

on Sunday morning December 24th at 11 a.m. in the sanctuary,

Including Silent Night candle lighting and Joy to the World



New Years Eve Service

on Sunday morning December 31st at 10:30 a.m.

Waffle Church format in the fellowship hall.



First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

A movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God welcomed us.

All of Us, Ministers

Rev. Jennifer Jacobson, Pastor

Vacant - Accompanist

Joanne Kestermont, Office Administrator

Rev. Bill Robey, Interim Regional Minister

Rev. Terri Horde Owens
General Minister and President

Sunday Schedule

9:30AM Education
10:50AM Gathering Time
11:00AM Worship
12:15PM Fellowship Time
2:00PM Book Group (4th
Sunday)

Office Hours

Monday - Friday
9:00AM - 12:00PM (noon)

Our staff are in and out of the office throughout the week. Please feel free to stop by during their office hours or make an appointment that fits your schedule.

Officers

Dick Talley, Moderator
Vacant - Vice-Moderator
Betty Schmidling, Secretary
Leslie Pinkston, Treasurer

Important Links:

Regional Website (incl. monthly newsletter)
<https://northernlightsdisciples.org/>

General Church Website:
www.disciples.org



WINTER WEATHER AND FCC

Our office will be closed whenever the B'ham Public Schools are closed due to snow.

In all weather Sunday services will continue as scheduled. If the roads look at all dangerous, please stay home.

A Note From the Pastor

“I do not understand the mystery of grace -- only that it meets us where we are and does not leave us where it found us.” Ann Lamott

“A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject of all, subject to all.” Martin Luther

“Paradox is simply truth standing on its head to get our attention!” Richard La Gallienne

The Power of Paradox

Which comes first? The chicken or the egg? Does the chicken produce the egg, or does the egg produce the chicken? Put another way: which comes first God's Grace or Our Responsibility? Does God “produce” us or do we, by our efforts, “produce” God?

Well, yes, in a manner of speaking.

Richard Rohr, author of *Breathing Under Water: Spirituality and the Twelve Steps*, proposes Christians deal in such paradoxes all the time. Since the beginning we have held these contradictory truths to be self-evident:

Jesus is human and divine.

God is Creator/Redeemer/Sanctifier – Majesty/
Mercy/Mystery – Father/Son/Spirit.

Mary is a virgin and mother.

The Lord's Table holds grape and grain AND
the mystery of the Risen Christ

Almost all true spirituality has a paradoxical character to it, writes Rohr, which is why the totally rational or dualistic mind invariably misses the point and just calls things as they do not understand wrong, heresy, or stupid. Religion has too often given people these doctrines to believe without gifting them the proper software – so to speak – to process those very beliefs.

All or Nothing thinking allows for no nuance of meaning or experience. Either/Or thinking limits understanding to what is presented on the surface. God is too vast to be defined in mere words. Love, Grace, and Mercy hold so much more when they come from the Creator of the Universe. Language itself is only a tool directing our thoughts and hearts toward the truth they mean to carry. The words are not the truth, but signposts showing us the way.

Dualistic thinking turns faith into a belief, an act of reason that – once considered rationally – may be assented to. Faith becomes simply a “good work” that



A Note From the Pastor cont.

we can choose to perform. One and done!

This check list notion of salvation frequently leads to knowing and saying all the right religious words, without any indication of genuine self-reflection, without any transformation of consciousness evidenced by a change in personal behavior and Christ-like culturally critical behavior. We are familiar with those who claim the name of Christ who have remained thoroughly materialistic, war-like, selfish, racist, sexist, power hungry, greedy, all while relying of “Amazing Grace” to snatch them into heaven at the end – but they surely did not bring much heaven on to this earth to help the least of these as Jesus instructed.

Holding space in our spiritual lives for paradox and tension, leaning into things that seem contrary, is the pathway out of dualistic thinking and into the broader, deeper realm of God’s infinite possibility. We must both try and not try, do and do not (Yoda!), care and care not (T.S. Eliot). We hold on to the creative tension until we can see the connection and discover they might not be contrary at all. We build a bridge and let it be built for us, at the same time.

It is not a speedy process. In contemplation and resting in the tension we learn to wait for it, to prepare the mind for it – there is a softening of the heart, a deepening of expectation and desire, then comes a readiness to let go and the recognition that we maybe really do not want to let go, followed by the actual willingness to change. All of this is the work of weeks, months, maybe years.

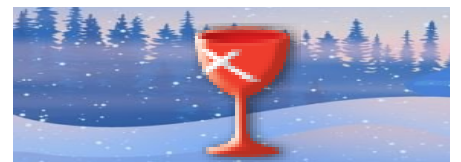
Richard Rohr reverses an old aphorism, saying we must *pray as if it all depends on us, and work as if it all depends on God*. In twelve step terms we understand and stand under – we understand our need for change and growth and at the same time know we stand under the grace, power and mercy of our Higher Power, who is for us the Holy One of Old, the One who alone has the power to effect such change in our lives.

“God is humble and never comes if not first invited, but God will always find some clever way to get god-self invited.”

Come, Thou long expected Jesus, born to set Thy people free; From our fears and sins release us, Let us find our rest in Thee.

Peace be with you in this Holy season of Advent,

Pastor Jenny



Although it's sad to reminisce on Christmases we knew,
this year I shall celebrate in memory of you.

I'll put aside my sorrow with every unshed tear,
and concentrate on all the joy we shared when you were here.

Our time together taught me what Christmas time is for,
and that's what I'll remember until we meet once more.

Author Unknown

WASHINGTON LAW ON WARMING UP CARS:

In most cases, yes, leaving a car engine on and unattended is illegal. The revised code of Washington states that a driver, or person in charge of a vehicle, cannot leave a car alone without first:

- 1) Stopping the engine,
- 2) Locking the ignition,
- 3) Removing the key, and
- 4) Setting the brake.



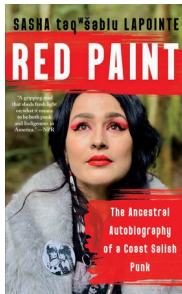
When parking on a grade turning the front wheels to the curb or side of the highway. *Failure to do the above can result in an infraction notice. Depending on the scenario, this can be a warning or a ticket.* You will be held liable for any collision or damage caused by a car you left unattended.



DECEMBER BOOK CLUB

This month we will meet on Sunday December 17 at 2pm. Talk to Linda Heyne for more information bee.sioux@gmail.com

RED PAINT: THE ANCESTRAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A COAST SALISH PUNK



by Sasha LaPointe

Sasha taqwšebłu LaPointe, a Coast Salish indigenous woman, has always longed for a sense of home. As a child her family moved around frequently, often staying in barely habitable church attics and trailers, dangerous places for young Sasha. As an adolescent determined to escape the poverty and abuse of her childhood in order to build a better future for herself and her people, Sasha throws herself headlong into the world, with little more to guide her than a passion for the thriving punk scene of the Pacific Northwest and a desire to live up to the responsibility of being the namesake of her beloved great-grandmother, a linguist who helped preserve her indigenous language of Lushootseed and one in a long line of powerful ancestors. Exploring what it means to be vulnerable in love and in art while offering an unblinking reckoning with personal traumas as well as the col-

The Magic of
Christmas
is not in the presents
but in *His* 
presence



Faith Community Nurse

Greetings,

As we prepare for the birth of Christ this Advent Season it is important to prepare ourselves for this season of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. Caring for ourselves and those around us by making sure we are up to date on our vaccines, specifically flu and COVID, wearing masks when traveling on buses, trains, planes, ferries, taxi's, rideshares and while shopping this busy holiday season allows us to protect ourselves and other so we can all enjoy gathering with family and friends.

Remember if you feel sick make sure you test for COVID-19. The Department of Health has more information about when to test, what to do if you have been exposed to COVID-19, and if your test is positive. <https://doh.wa.gov/COVID-19>

Everyone should continue to use **COVID-19 prevention measures** such as staying up to date on vaccination, testing, using good ventilation indoors, and staying home when you're sick.

Merry Christmas!

Rebecca

Rebecca Cavanaugh, RN, MN, NCSN-E

December Book Club (Cont.)

lective historical traumas of colonialism and genocide that continue to haunt native peoples, *Red Paint* is an intersectional autobiography of lineage, resilience and above all the ability to heal that chronicles Sasha's struggles navigating a collapsing marriage while answering the call to greater purpose. Set against a backdrop of tour vans and the breathtaking beauty of Coast Salish ancestral land and imbued with the universal spirit of punk-an ethos that challenges us to reclaim what's rightfully ours: our histories, our power, our traditions, and our truths- *Red Paint* is ultimately a story of the ways we learn to heal while fighting for our right to a place to call home.



Cookie Evangelism:

It's a bummer to work during the holidays, especially in retail.



We will box up some homemade goodness for workers in our neighborhood after church on December 17.

Volunteers needed to (1) bake holiday cookies and get them to church by 12/17, (2) to meet after church to box them up, and then (3) to deliver to the addresses provided.



Sign up after the service on 12/3 and 12/10

A MESSAGE FROM OUR SOCIAL JUSTICE / OUTREACH TEAM

Beginning on Monday, November 27, from 1:00-1:30 our group will start a 3 part study about Social Justice. It is called *The Justice Primer* and can be found on the Disciples of Christ website in the Disciples Home Mission section.

Or ask Linda Heyne for a copy.
All are welcome to join us.

[The Justice Primer](#)

We will spend time discussing and thinking about what it means to have social justice in our world.

We are also forming a description of our Social Justice/ Outreach task here at First Christian Church.

Members of our group are Bob Fisher, Bruce Radtke, Bridget Becker, Linda Heyne, Yvonne Bembelezab, Zoe Illa Becker, Marcielle Kobel, Ann Hall.





Some Green Chalice Eco-Tips

- **CUT BACK ON PAPER TOWELS**
- **LIMIT ELECTRONICS USAGE**
- **TURN OFF YOUR ICE MAKER**
- **WASH CLOTHES IN COLD WATER**
- **DON'T USE PLASTIC PLATES - OPT FOR PAPER**
- **TAKE SHORTER SHOWERS**
- **UPGRADE TO A SMART THERMOSTAT**

What do you call a snowman in the summer?

Answer: A puddle!



ELDERS AND READERS

December

3: Renee Hoemann / KrissAnn Lewis

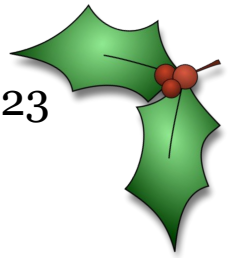
10: Jimmie Talley / Marceille Kobel

17: KrisAnn Lewis / Brian Shrout

24: Leslie Pinkston / Bruce Radtke

31: James Becker / Linda Heyne

December 2023



Sunday

Education 9:30

Worship at 11 am

Followed by Fellowship Hour

Guest preacher Naomi Gonzalez 12/31

Monday

Prayer in the Prayer Room @ 8:30 am
(weekly)

Office 9 am to noon

Boy Scouts - 6:45 to 9 pm

Tuesday

Office 9 am to noon

Discussion Group 10 am via Zoom

MB Toppers 6:45 to 10 pm

Health Ministries Board Mtg

12/19 3:30 Library

Wednesday

Office 9 am to noon

Choir Practice 12 noon in the sanctuary

Iglesia 7th Dia 6:45 to 9 pm

FCC Elders Mtg 12/20 6 pm

Thursday

Office 9 am to noon

Bible Study 10 am via Zoom

Breathing Under Water 2 pm
prayer room

Choir Practice 3pm in the
sanctuary

Ukrainian Church 5 to 10 pm

CODA 6:30 to 8:15

4H (1st Thurs only) 7 to 8:30 pm

Friday

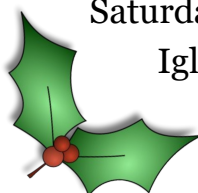
Office 9 am to noon

Iglesia 7th Dia 6:30 to 9 pm

Ukrainian Church 7 to 9 pm

Saturday

Iglesia 7th Dia 9 am to 6 pm



Coming Events

In the area

Dec 1-3, 8-10, & 15-17 ... Pacific Arts Market— 10am to 6 pm @ Bellis Fair Mall

Located between JC Penny and the Food Court outside entrance the first three week-ends of December. Enjoy carefully curated handmade gifts. Come out and meet the artists in their element!

Dec 2 & 3 ... Holiday Port Festival—Bellingham Cruise Terminal - 11am - 5pm

This free festival includes music and dance performances, a gingerbread house display and visits and photos with Santa Claus

Dec 2, 7 & 12 Fairhaven Village Inn - 12 - 3pm

FATHER CHRISTMAS & CARRIAGE RIDES

Enjoy a free visit from Father Christmas & enjoy a festive carriage ride through the village!

Dec 13 ... O Christmas Tea - A British Comedy at MBT - 7:30pm

When catastrophe strikes at James and Jamesy's Christmas tea party, flooding the world with tea, the duo conjure wildly funny solutions to stay afloat, and sweep the audience out to sea in this jolly holiday escapade.



Coming Events

At FCC

Dec 20 ... Board Meet- ing

5:30pm in the Library

Dec 16 ...Game Night

6 to 9 pm in the Library

Dec 21 ... Longest Night Service

7pm in the courtyard around the Schmidling's fire pit. Dress warmly, Bring a folding chair and blanket. Hot beverages provided.

Dec 24 ... Christmas Eve Service

11 am in the sanctuary, including Silent Night candle lighting and Joy to the World.

Dec 31 ... Waffle Church

10:30am in the fellowship hall with guest preacher Naiomi Gonzalez



Coming Events

In the area

(Con't)

Dec 31 ... Ring of Fire & Hope

Along the shores of Birch Bay from Birch Bay State Park to Birch Bay Village - (7:00 PM SHARP)

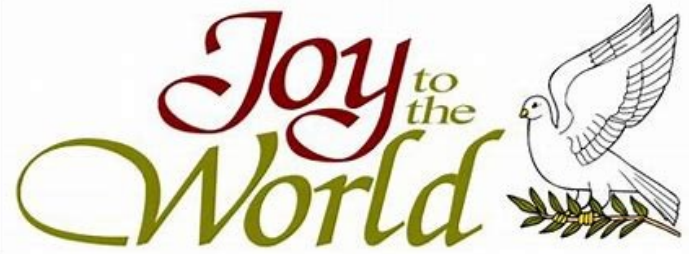
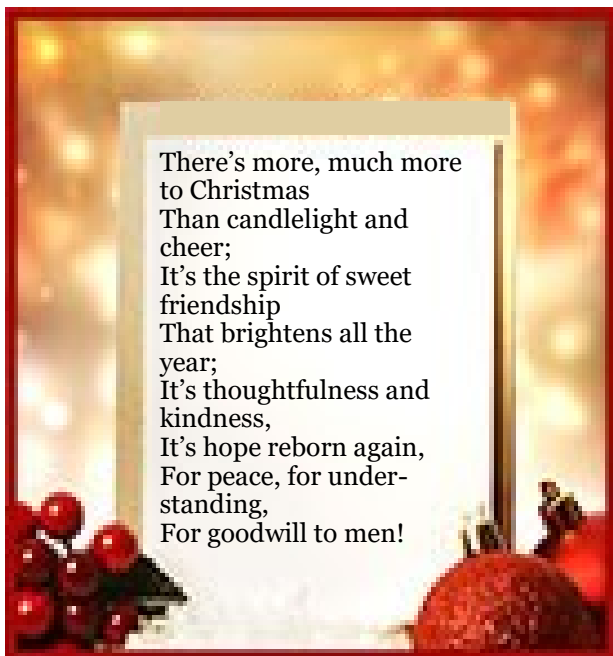
Celebrating the transition of the New Year, the community of Birch Bay presents the Annual Ring of Fire & Hope on December 31. Taking place after dark, the crescent-shaped shoreline of the bay is lit with hundreds of road flares to signify hope for the coming year.

A Note from our Elder of the Month

FCC Elders continue their study of John Pavlovitz's book *A Bigger Table: Building Messy, Authentic, and Hopeful Spiritual Community*.

A Bigger Table invites readers to envision a church that is big enough for everyone, by holding up a mirror to the modern church and speaking clearly on issues at the heart of the Christian community: LGBT inclusion, gender equality, racial tensions, global concerns, and theological shifts. John Pavlovitz shares moving personal stories, his careful observations as a pastor, and his understanding of the ancient stories of Jesus to set the table for a new, positive, more loving conversation on these and other important matters of faith.

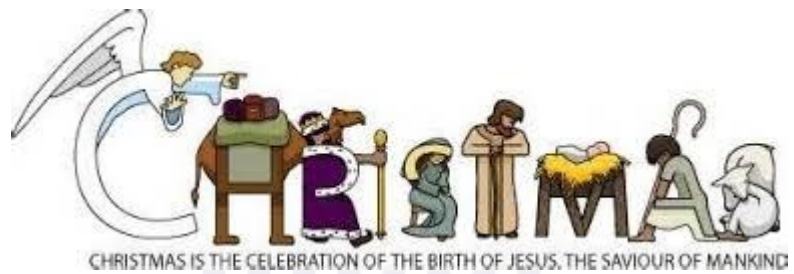
Talk to any Elder if you would like to hear more about this. The book is available through the Whatcom County Library (once Renee returns it!)



One night a Viking named Rudolph the Red was looking out the window when he said, "It's going to rain."

His wife asked, "How do you know?"

"Because Rudolph the Red knows rain, dear."



Prayer Requests

We offer up prayers for all caught in the conflicts in the middle east, eastern Europe and the world.

Also for Kathy, Jayne, Janet, Cyndy, Marian, Norman, Connie, Ardythe, Ann, Bob, Bea, Neal, KrisAnn, Brad, Beverly, Frankie Sue, Kyle and Jessica, Staff Sergeant Buckman and the family of Adam Poole.

Please email Joanne in the office with any additions to the prayer list for pastor or inclusion in the bulletin.



Dear Friend of Habitat,

Habitat's exponential growth has been made possible through the generosity of neighbor helping neighbor with a hand-up, not a hand-out. And at Habitat, generosity is measured by so much more than gifts alone. Eleven homes in 2024 will not be possible without church, civic, business, women's groups, youth groups and individuals lending a helping hand.

As the traditional giving season approaches, please support Habitat's ever-growing impact on solving the local housing crisis. Over the next few weeks, leading up to Giving Tuesday, we will share some more traditional and novel ways you can help support Habitat's mission.

Click below to learn more about some great ways to support our mission. Alternatively, you can visit our [more ways to donate page](#).

Sign up to
[Volunteer](#)

[Donate](#) your
used Vehicle

Make a One
[Time](#) Gift

There are so many ways to help bring affordable housing to our community, and every hand makes a difference.

In partnership,

John Moon

Executive Director

Habitat for Humanity in Whatcom County



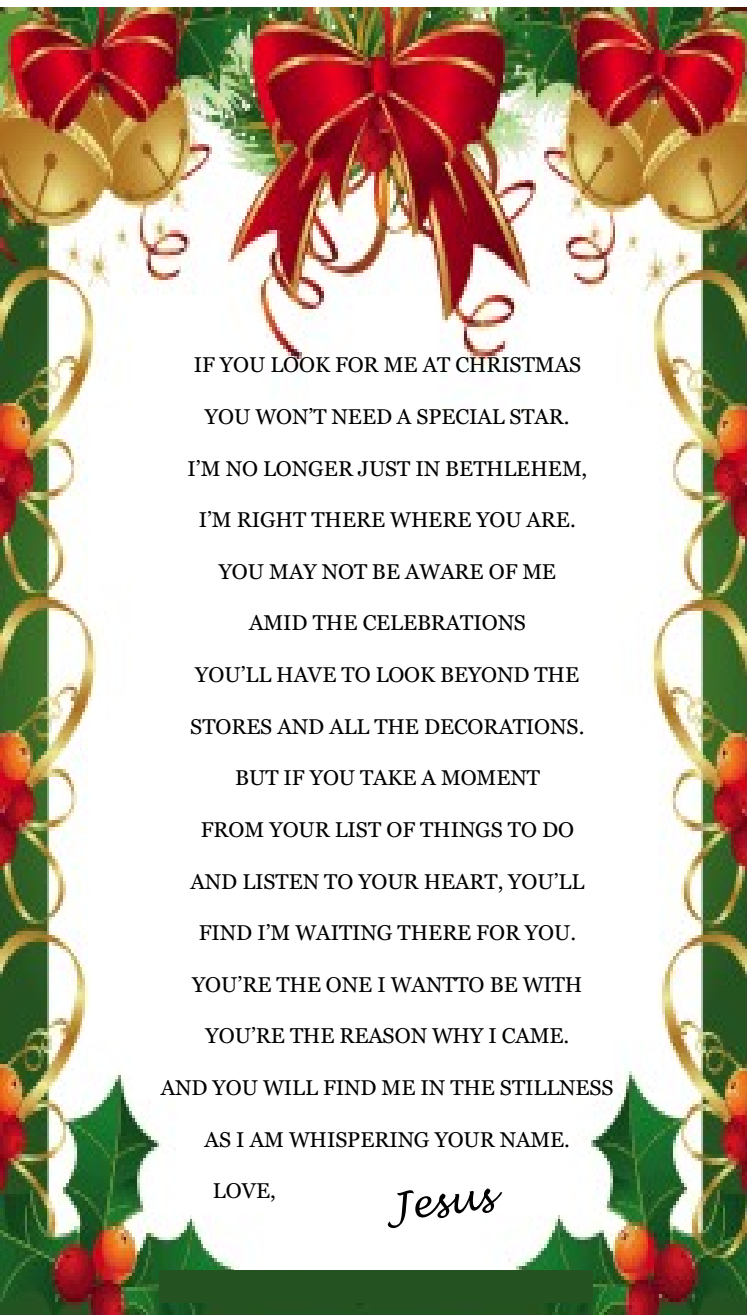
BUY A SHED & HELP BUILD AN AFFORDABLE HOME!

Our Habitat Shed fundraiser fuels our mission of bringing people together to build homes, community, and hope.

Built to order by our talented team of regular volunteers, each shed is made to order and painted the color of your choice from our [GreenSheen selection](#). Our 6x10' base model, available to view at our Habitat Store, is for sale for \$4,500.

Sheds can be customized by size (length, width and height), custom windows and doors, color, and style. Our turnover is 2-6 months.





IF YOU LOOK FOR ME AT CHRISTMAS
 YOU WON'T NEED A SPECIAL STAR.
 I'M NO LONGER JUST IN BETHLEHEM,
 I'M RIGHT THERE WHERE YOU ARE.
 YOU MAY NOT BE AWARE OF ME
 AMID THE CELEBRATIONS
 YOU'LL HAVE TO LOOK BEYOND THE
 STORES AND ALL THE DECORATIONS.
 BUT IF YOU TAKE A MOMENT
 FROM YOUR LIST OF THINGS TO DO
 AND LISTEN TO YOUR HEART, YOU'LL
 FIND I'M WAITING THERE FOR YOU.
 YOU'RE THE ONE I WANT TO BE WITH
 YOU'RE THE REASON WHY I CAME.
 AND YOU WILL FIND ME IN THE STILLNESS
 AS I AM WHISPERING YOUR NAME.

LOVE,

Jesus



Take our teardrops and wrap them in much love
 and ask the wind to carry them to Mum and Dad above.
 Miracles are very rare, but for Christmas, one would do,
 to hear the doorbell ring and to have you both walk
 smiling through.

You left us such happy memories, that can make us
 laugh and cry,

The memories we have together, no money in the world
 can buy.

There's this place in our hearts no one can fill
 Missing you both and always will.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

WINTER SHELTER 2023-24

Civic Field Locker Room

Dec 1 - Feb 29, 7pm - 8am

Shelter is open 7 days a week

45 bed capacity - first come, first served

Each shift will have:

1 supervisor, 3 support staff, 1 van driver

Evening shift also includes:

1 behavioral health specialist

1 resource navigator

Overnight shift will have:

1 supervisor & 1 support staff

Volunteer Roles:

Managing the food table (heating water & restocking from storage)

Helping with belongings storage

Walking thru the check-in line to get info entered ahead of time

Directing traffic

Bagging & tagging bedding for next night

Riding in van to support driver

VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT NEEDED:

1-2 Shifts per week commitment

Shifts are 6am -10am / 6pm-10pm

Sunday - Saturday

For consistency we would like you to commit to working the same day and shift weekly for the whole season

