***A Warm Place for Winter: Sheltering our Unsheltered***

November 1, 2020

Dear Neighbour of St Peter’s Parish,

Building upon the successes and lessons-learned from the winter shelter we have hosted for the past two years, St. Peter’s Parish is once again partnering B.C.’s Ministry of Housing, to bring the winter shelter [the Shelter] to those who are experiencing homelessness this winter. This year, we are partnering with a new Operator, the Nanaimo Unitarian Shelter.

The Nanaimo Unitarian Shelter has been offering services at the Nanaimo Unitarian Fellowship hall for over 12 years. Many of those years they ran a winter-only shelter very similar to our program. They have expanded their shelter services to year-round and are now bringing their over ten years of seasonal shelter experience to our partnership.

**Important Winter Shelter 2020-2021 Information**

We want to ensure that this winter’s Shelter will be a vital community service fulfilling the fundamental human needs of food, shelter and warmth through the cold winter months. This program is especially needed for those in our community who have no place to weather out the global Covid-19 Pandemic and therefore have greater health risks from exposure to elements.

**Shelter Service Basics**

* St. Peter’s Parish is located at 301 Machleary Street. The Winter Shelter is located in the Parish Hall, on the lower level. Guests are asked to enter at the back of the church. (well-marked signs]
* There is a maximum of 25 beds *(down from 35 last year to accommodate social distancing and ensure increased staff support for guests).*
* Shelter opens November 15, 2020 and closes on March 31, 2021.
* Hours of operation are 8:30pm to 7:00am, every day. (*Hours are reduced from previous years to minimize neighbourhood and church activity disruption).*
* Shelter is open to adults 19 years and older; to all genders.
* We require Guests to be respectful of neighbours and the neighbourhood.
* The staffing model this year has expanded for additional support and monitoring of the program.

**Positive Community Relations**

The Shelter has policies and procedures to facilitate how the Shelter operators, hosts, partners, and guests engage, communicate and work with the surrounding community to foster a positive relationship. If you need to report an issue, please contact the Shelter manager to share your concerns.

Please be aware that we have a maximum of 25 beds and the current population of individuals experiencing homeless in Nanaimo exceeds our bed numbers. A person whose behaviour is causing concern in your neighbourhood may not be a Guest at the Shelter, but we will see if we can assist. Anytime that the law is being broken it is appropriate to call the police.

Both the Nanaimo Unitarian Shelter executive and staff at St. Peter’s Parish are available to answer questions and address concerns throughout the season. We are available by email or phone and can arrange to speak to neighbours or others as requested.

In closing, we thank you very much for supporting our Guests at the Winter Shelter. It is greatly appreciated. If you are interested in making a difference, we would be happy to receive donations of clothing, food, or small items. Of particular need is pajamas.

*Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. Hebrews 13:16*

Yours truly in community health and safety,

<signature> <signature>

Isha Matous-Gibbs, Executive Director Bishop Gary Gordon, Pastor

Nanaimo Unitarian Shelter St. Peter’s Parish

**Contact Information**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Nanaimo Unitarian Shelter | St. Peter’s Parish |
| Shelter Manager: [kevan.s.griffith@gmail.com](mailto:kevan.s.griffith@gmail.com)  Shelter phone number: TBA on our website  Nanaimo Unitarian Shelter Executive Director: [shelter@ufon.ca](mailto:shelter@ufon.ca)  Website: <https://ufon.ca/weather-shelter/>  Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/unitarianshelter | Phone: 250-753-3570 [to leave a message]  Email: [stpetersnanaimo@shaw.ca](mailto:stpetersnanaimo@shaw.ca)  Website: [www.stpetersnanaimo.caFacebook](http://www.stpetersnanaimo.caFacebook): Facebook.com/STPetersNanaimo |