



St. Louise Parish

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(425) 747-4450

Blessings!

As you know, St. Louise Parish has been a strong supporter of the New Bethlehem Project in Kirkland. For more than two years we have been working along with Catholic Community Services (CCS), Holy Family Kirkland, Salt Lutheran Church and other organizations to provide a year-round day center for families experiencing homelessness on the eastside. Construction of a permanent 24/7 shelter for homeless families is well underway, with hope that the new shelter will open by summer of 2020. In the meantime, the families need a place to spend the nights. For the past five years there have been eight different churches that have taken turns offering overnight shelter to homeless families with one or two parents that have at least one minor child. St. Louise has not previously hosted the shelter, but after another church had to cancel their commitment, CCS came to us with the urgent request to offer these families a safe place to spend the night from August 17 to October 1. The families will sleep either in the Parish Hall or in the St. Louise Room in the original school building. CCS and St. Louise parish are committed to the safety of everyone on our parish campus and most especially the children in our parish and school as well for the safety of the children in the shelter.

Since school started, Mr. Fitzpatrick reports that the families are gone, and the buildings look like no one has been there once our students begin to arrive. Every morning, Mr. Fitzpatrick walks through the Parish Hall and the original school building at 8:00 AM to verify all is clean, safe and well. I have personally witnessed that the families are preparing to leave by 6:00 AM when I stop in to visit.

Dan Fitzpatrick, Katie O'Neill (of our parish staff) and I will field any questions or concerns that parishioners or school families may have. Since the shelter will operate mostly opposite times of day from our St. Louise School programs, we expect there will be very little or no interaction at all between the two groups – except if school families volunteer to help serve food for our guests. If you are interested in volunteering to prepare and serve food for the families, you may do so by signing up at <https://signup.com/client/invitation2/secure/1922673/false#/invitation>.

Here's information about the CCS family shelter published in last week's bulletin:

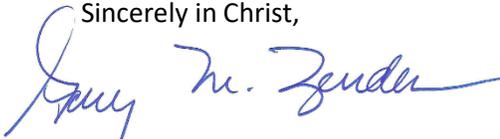
- CCS have two dedicated staff members who will be on site each night to manage the shelter.
- The shelter runs from 8:30 PM to 6:45 AM. CCS staff sets up between 7:30 PM and 8 PM and cleans up by 7:30AM.
- The CCS staff are responsible for physical shelter operations (setup, breakdown, supervising meals, cleaning of the facility and transporting supplies) as well as direct service to shelter guests (intake, safety and security, information and referral, and crisis intervention). Our facilities crew continues to do their normal duties to make sure that our campus buildings are clean.
- A supervisor who maintains relationships with community partners and visits the shelter at least four times a week during hours of operation supports the CCS staff. Depending on the church hosting the shelter, one or more additional volunteers are available to assist with meeting families' needs.
- Volunteer groups through an online sign-up system provide evening meals. This is coordinated and managed by CCS, not St. Louise but groups from St. Louise can sign up to help provide a meal. To volunteer to deliver and serve an evening meal to our guests, you may sign up at <https://signup.com/client/invitation2/secure/1922673/false#/invitation>

- A light breakfast is available in the morning.
- A case manager from the New Bethlehem Day Center is on site once per week to make sure families are encouraged to visit New Bethlehem during the day and are connected to and remain in contact with the Eastside Coordinated Entry RAP, which is the entry point for housing for homeless families.
- A storage POD with supplies for the shelter will be parked in one parking stall on the south side of campus for the duration of the family shelter.
- Catholic Community Services Contact: Shelter Supervisor – Cynthia McGee 206-437-7448 or Agency Director – Bill Hallerman 206-718-2025.

I hope that you will find this information helpful. I am grateful that we at St. Louise are able to both serve children and families at our school and parish as well as those who are homeless.

I wish you and your family a most blessed school year!

Sincerely in Christ,



Fr. Gary Zender
Pastor