

“Love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints. Extend hospitality to strangers.” Romans 12:10-13

Northminster has a long history of working with homelessness as a part of our commitment to the gospel to love and care for those in need . A homeless shelter has been in operation at Northminster Presbyterian since 1997. This shelter was its own 501c3 and partnered with different agencies in the city to increase the open bed count. The shelter was entirely volunteer run, and the infrastructure no longer matched the scope of city’s challenge. Many people in the neighborhood visited and served within the shelter, including adults and minor children.

Northminster began its conversation with SHARE shortly after the close of the previous shelter. We visited SHARE’s inside shelters, not their tent-cities, because we are not hosting a tent city. We met with current shelter hosts at churches such as St Paul’s and Trinity United Methodist. We forged an agreement that we believed both created the space to allow safe housing while preserving a safe neighborhood. The agreement provides for guests to be within our space during specified hours, and to be removed from that space (within a 5 block radius) outside of those hours. None of the hours coincide with hours in which the school is in session.

Northminster engaged in communication with the neighborhood, including the preschool and elementary school. Flyers that described the shelter and invited neighbors to a public meeting were circulated on December 6th. A meeting was held on December 11th. We also posted notice of the meeting on our facility at all visible points.

SHARE operates as a democratic co-op, in an effort to support the agency and capacity of it’s guests. They make every effort to invite safe people into their environment. Drug use and alcohol use is not tolerated. Their screening is based on a personal interview between the leader of the shelter and the incoming guest. The structure of SHARE has a focus on finding those guests who are able to be positive community contributors. This is the heart of the SHARE model.

SHARE is an agency that the city of Seattle funds and supports. With this come performance reviews and results based funding. Local churches and non-profits have had a history of partnering with city agencies to help create solutions in the face of current challenges. Our own local church has a strong tradition of this work, and we are grateful to be able to quite literally, keep people off the street.

For those that have an interest in helping and would like to learn more, we would like to invite you to a **shared community meal on February 5th at 6:30pm in our Fellowship Hall.**