

October 17, 2024

Dear Interfaith Coalition Member,

What an amazing journey the State Street Winter Family Shelter has been! We are getting ready for our first full season of sheltering families. The physical shelter has a short punch list of items to accomplish but the space is ready, and we are starting to move furnishings into place. The one hurdle left is to obtain a *Certificate of Occupancy* from the city and our contractor is on that.

We need at least one (more are welcome) representative of your community to attend a **Coalition zoom meeting**. I've set up a way to find out when the most communities are available **the week of October 28:**

Please visit

<https://www.when2meet.com/?27090212-uOtGN>

to let me know when you're available.

- We are planning to **open on Monday, November 18**
- State Street Church is planning a **Shelter Open House on Sunday, November 17 from 1-3 pm**. Please have your members come and look at the new shelter. If you prefer, we can set up a different time for members of your faith community to come take a look at the shelter, before November 17. If you can help with this event, please let me know.
- Paul Smith of First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church of Portland is in the process of developing a much easier to use, integrated and comprehensive **sign-up program**. He has experience with these management tools. We will explain the new system at the meeting.
- When the system is complete . your faith organization will initially be provided exclusive online sign-up access based on the week(s) you have committed to provide volunteers. In the meantime, **we need start to gather which community will take the early weeks**. We recognize we may need help from everyone to cover Thanksgiving and Christmas weeks, though feel free to take one of those on if you think you can. [The temporary sign up for weeks at the shelter is here](#), please talk with your group and sign up for a week. If you need to team up with another community, to fill a week, please reach out directly to them or let me know.
- **Background checks are valid for five years** so any volunteer who submitted one last season will be all set for this year. There will be a box on your sign-up profile to see if you are all set.

- We will ask for representatives from each community **to meet three times** this season. Once, at the meeting linked above, once in January, and once in June for a follow up.
- To keep things nimble, there will be a **management team** made up of reps from six active coalition faith communities who will meet once a month via zoom.
- We will have one staff member open the shelter at 6 pm and orient new volunteers. We'll need one volunteer greeter from 6-8:30 pm and two overnight volunteers from 8:00 pm until 7:30 am, the next morning.
- We would like to find a way to keep the shelter open on **Sundays, Holidays, and if possible, snow days**. These are days when families have nowhere else to go. We will be seeking two volunteers for EACH of two daytime shifts on Sundays: 7:30 am – 12:30 pm and 12:30 pm to 5:30 pm
- Volunteers will each have their own space to sleep. Please bring your own sleeping bag/bed linens.
- There will be **new guidelines** for the new space. Like the last two seasons, this promises to be another learning year. And we are eager and excited for it. We'll be sending copies soon.
- Listed below are the faith communities involved in the coalition. I looked at each website to try to **get the names of each faith community accurate**. Please look and tell me if your community's name needs correcting. We may be putting out a press release before the open house and if asked, I want to make sure you are represented properly.
- Has the Shelter contact for your faith community changed? Please let me know.
- Do you know of any other communities that may want to be involved in the coalition?

This project is a tremendous way for us to make an impact. We are stronger together. Faith communities have always been important community partners and together we can make a tangible difference for families who otherwise may be left outside in the winter months. At present we are 18 communities representing 6 different religions or denominations. We cannot do this alone.

With much gratitude and hope,

Bryan

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State Street Winter Family Shelter Coalition

Baha'i Community of Portland Maine

Congregation Bet Ha'am, Reform Jewish, South Portland

Congregational Church in Cumberland, United Church of Christ

Falmouth Congregational Church, UCC

First Parish in Portland, Unitarian Universalist

First Universalist Church of Yarmouth

Foreside Community Church, Falmouth, UCC

First Congregational-Christian Church, New Gloucester, UCC

North Yarmouth Congregational Church (UCC)

Portland Friends Meeting (Quakers)

South Freeport Congregational Church, UCC

First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, South Portland

State Street Church, United Church of Christ, Portland

Trinity Episcopal Church, Portland

Tuttle Road Community Church, Cumberland

Williston-Immanuel United Church, UCC & American Baptist, Portland

Woodfords Congregational, UCC, Portland