

How can our congregation become involved in ending homelessness?

Several congregations of many denominations from the surrounding communities in northern Washington County are members of FLAMF – Forest Lake Area Mission for Families. FLAMF has been meeting for more than five years with the goal of providing caring support, encouragement, resources and shelter for homeless families.

Why is a shelter for homeless families opening in Hugo?

The need is great in Washington County. School district #831 officials estimate that between 40-50 students report themselves and their families as being without stable housing at any given time. Over the past six years, the Community Resource Center at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Mahtomedi has provided the only overnight shelter option for families in Washington County by utilizing a vacant rectory facility at Guardian Angels Catholic Church in Oakdale.

Last year alone, the St. Andrew's Community Resource Center received 21 calls from families in Forest Lake and Hugo who were experiencing homelessness. The new St. Andrew's Family Shelter in Hugo will expand the ability to serve homeless neighbors in the northern end of Washington County by opening a new shelter at the vacant rectory building at St. Genevieve Catholic Church in Hugo on Hwy. 61.

How will the St. Andrew's Family Shelter operate?

St. Andrew's will operate the shelter, and a St. Andrew's staff member will be onsite during the majority of each day. FLAMF will coordinate with area churches, including ours, to provide ongoing support to the shelter through volunteers and hospitality.

How will homeless families be able to access shelter at the new St. Andrew's Family Shelter in Hugo?

Once the shelter is open and operating, families should be referred to the St. Andrew's Community Resource Center (CRC) in Mahtomedi. CRC staff will meet with families and provide ongoing case management until the family has found stable housing. The CRC also provides rental assistance for homeless prevention, counseling services, employment mentoring, clothing, basic needs, emergency food, community meals and more. Families of any faith are welcome to receive services at the CRC.

What is the timeframe?

Renovations on the St. Genevieve rectory will begin in late summer 2017, with the goal of the shelter becoming operational by the end of 2017.

How can we help?

Be part of God's plan as we answer God's call to love one another by serving at the St. Andrew's Family Shelter. There will be opportunities to help with home renovation and repair later this summer, as well as ongoing volunteer needs to help with hospitality, and to serve at the shelter once it is operating.

If you are interested in staying up to date as the project progresses and being informed of volunteer opportunities as they arise, please contact Debbie Larson at DLarson@saintandrews.org to be placed on our email communications list.