

Okay...

So

Now

What??

Joining with the Valparaiso Men's
Shelter and New Creation Ministries

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

For the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree and for those seeking ordination within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, each intern is required to complete a project in one of four areas: evangelism, stewardship, lay ministry, or ecumenism. While social ministry could really fit under all four of these categories, I chose to categorize this project under stewardship. From the beginning of the capital campaign and the building project, we have heard that a church is more than just a space. We know this to be true from our experiences and from our Lutheran theology. It is not the walls and structure that comprise the church, but the people within it (see Articles VII & VIII of the Augsburg Confession). The new sanctuary and narthex facilities allow us room to grow, and it is my hope that as we grow in our physical space our ministries continue to grow to fill it.

Even in the community of Valparaiso, there is a growing group of people without a home. While shelters and other facilities exist for families and for women, there is no permanent shelter in Porter County for single men who are experiencing homelessness. To help fill this space in the community, churches throughout the Valparaiso area have joined together to serve as a floating men's shelter from October through April. It's still a relatively new ministry; 2009-2010 will be their second full season. We currently support the Valparaiso Men's Shelter through our monthly social ministry emphases, through work that our own men's group has done, and through the work of individuals.

My project is not meant to say that what we were doing before was inadequate, but rather it is to take something that existed already (our relationship with the men's shelter) and provide some tools for that ministry to grow. With that in mind, this booklet is designed to summarize the information that I have gathered through my research into the feasibility of joining with this ministry and to provide the first few steps for anyone who feels called to help out with the Valparaiso Men's Shelter and the New Creation Men's Center. I hope you find this information helpful and I pray God's continued blessings on your ministry.

Thank you to Tom Isakson, Pr. Mario Bustos, the staff of Christ Lutheran, and the Social Ministry Team of Christ Lutheran, and many others for all your help.

In Christ's Love,

Matthew J. Tingler (Vicar 2008-2009)

What is the Valparaiso Men's Shelter?

- ❖ It is made up of 7 host churches with 14 supporting churches.
- ❖ New Creation Men's Center (653 Axe Avenue) provides support for the Men's Shelter, but the Center itself is not a shelter. Instead, each day of the week is organized and housed by one of the churches in support of the ministry.
- ❖ **Shelter Dates:** October 15 to April 15.
- ❖ At the end of the 2008-2009 season the shelter was housing around 20 men each night with the largest group reaching 24 men.
- ❖ **The operating times of each shelter site are 7pm-7am** with set-up and tear-down before and after. The men understand that they *must* be out by 7am.
- ❖ **Food:** The men are provided with a dinner that night and a hot breakfast the next morning. For lunch, sandwich materials and lunch bags are provided for the men so that they can make their own lunch if they wish. Some men may choose not to make a lunch because they are enrolled in the food stamps program. All of this food comes from the donations of various volunteers and church groups.
- ❖ **Recommended shift schedule:** 6pm to 10pm (includes setup and dinner), 10pm to 2am, 2am to 5am, 5am to 8am (includes breakfast, setting out lunch materials, and clean-up). Another option is to combine the two overnight shifts, but since the volunteers must stay awake, splitting it up might be easier.
- ❖ For the dinner and breakfast shifts, there is a minimum of three volunteers, one volunteer must be male. For the overnight shifts, the minimum is two men. There are no other gender specifications for the night shift. A more detailed schedule and description of the volunteers can be found in the Valparaiso Men's Shelter Volunteer Handbook.
- ❖ There will be training sessions held at each site church for the volunteers. The sessions will last an hour to an hour and a half. As the site churches schedule these, more information will become available.
- ❖ The Valparaiso Men's Shelter Coalition meets at the New Creation site bi-weekly on Wednesday at 1pm or 3pm. This is subject to some flexibility, so there is an e-mail list for meeting notifications and other news. Please contact Pastor Mario Bustos at Valparaiso Mennonite or Tom Isakson at New Creation for details. Theirs and others' contact information can be found on page 11 of this booklet.

Churches Supporting Valparaiso Men's Shelter

Bethel
Cornerstone Christian
Faith Memorial Lutheran
First Presbyterian
Grace New Testament
Heartland Christian
Heritage Lutheran
Hopewell Mennonite
Immanuel Lutheran
Liberty Bible
Living Hope

Prince of Peace Lutheran
St. Andrew Episcopal
St. Iakovos Greek Orthodox
St. John United
St. Paul Catholic
St. Teresa Catholic
Trinity Lutheran
Valparaiso Community
Valparaiso Mennonite
Valparaiso Nazarene

Ways to start...

- ❖ Pray for the men, for all those involved with the Men's Shelter, and for all who are currently experiencing homelessness.
- ❖ Provide financial support for the Men's Shelter and New Creation Men's Center.
- ❖ Give a monthly bus pass (\$30 at City Hall) so that the men can get to some of the outlying sites.
- ❖ Give gifts of daily, necessary items. (Please check with New Creation first as their needs may fluctuate).
- ❖ Promote community awareness of people experiencing homelessness and poverty.
- ❖ Provide food for the meals at the shelter and meals year round at New Creation.
- ❖ Shop at the New Creation Resale Store (653 Axe Avenue).
- ❖ Promote the Resale Store.
- ❖ Advertise New Creation's Yard Sales.
- ❖ Hire someone from the New Creation Men's Center. Information about both the Resale Store and hiring opportunities can be found in the FAQ section on page 10.

Volunteer Opportunities

- ❖ Volunteer at the New Creation Men's Center as an office worker.
- ❖ Help out at the Resale Store's yard sales.
- ❖ New Creation is also looking for business and social work professionals to donate their time and services. Contact the Men's Center for more information (pg. 11).
- ❖ Eat with the men. Yes, it might be difficult or even frightening at first, but entering into relationship by getting to know some of your brothers in Christ is a holy opportunity. It is in these relationships that we are Christ to our brothers, and in turn, our brothers are Christ to us!
- ❖ Serve the food at the host site and eat with the men.
- ❖ Provide transportation to some of the farther sites (especially Liberty Bible).
- ❖ Volunteer to serve a shift at the host site.
- ❖ Small Groups/Circles that volunteer together are an easy way to fill some of the numbers and to bond while serving together.
- ❖ Some churches assist the host sites by taking over all of the volunteer positions for one night (or more) per month. The site provides the space while another church provides all the people necessary to run the shelter that night. Some churches using this model are St. Iakovos Greek Orthodox and Faith Memorial Lutheran.
- ❖ A volunteer handbook for the overnight shelter is available for more information, as well as the annual training sessions that happen at the site churches.

Volunteer Facilitator

Your Role as Facilitator

I think there is a reason that God often first says, “fear not,” when a person is called to something. You might be like countless other prophets and leaders and think, “There’s no way that I can do all of what it takes to run the men’s shelter for one night!” You’re right, there isn’t! The role of the facilitator is not to run everything by yourself; it is to facilitate the process. It’s getting groups of volunteers together to break bread with these men. About ten to twenty people are usually involved each night with this process. You are not alone! There are multiple support mechanisms that are here to help you with this small group, the first of which is the small group itself. Another is your relationship with the Volunteer Co-facilitator. The Co-facilitator is there to help you when time constraints and life happen to prevent you from going to something you would normally attend. There is also support at Christ Lutheran through the Small Group Mentoring system, through Pastor, and through the rest of the staff. If you are feeling called to the position of volunteer facilitator, you probably already have a passion for social justice and for those who are experiencing homelessness. Prayerfully link into that passion and...fear not!

Responsibilities of the Facilitator

- ❖ Pray for the small group, for the men who come to the shelter, and for the churches involved with this ministry.
- ❖ Attend the Men’s Shelter volunteer training.
- ❖ Attend meetings of the Valparaiso Men’s Shelter Coalition.
- ❖ Attend regular meetings of the small group.
- ❖ Help lead discussions among the small group that help the group process their experiences and connect it with their own spiritual growth.
- ❖ Recruit volunteers to help with the men’s shelter.
- ❖ Coordinate schedules and tasks of the volunteers.
- ❖ Meet with the Co-facilitator to discuss the small group.
- ❖ Attend meetings of the Small Group Leaders Ministry Team at Christ Lutheran.
- ❖ Stay in contact with Pastor and your small group mentor at Christ Lutheran.
- ❖ Be flexible and creative!

Volunteer Co-facilitator

Your Role as Co-facilitator

No one can do this task alone! That's why it is important not to have just one person shouldering the load of coordinating all of the volunteers that are involved with this project. Your role is to help the facilitator coordinate the volunteers and sustain the small group process. After the Facilitator is finished with his or her term, you may be asked to facilitate. Fear not! A "task-oriented" small group will be the most efficient, helpful, and healthy way to sustain and carry out this ministry. In this small group setting, volunteers (and you!) can process the events that they have just experienced. Small group members grow together spiritually through wrapping the whole experience in devotions together, through prayer, and by discussing questions like, "Where do you see God at work in this situation?"

Responsibilities of the Co-facilitator

- ❖ Pray for the small group, for the men who come to the shelter, and for the churches involved with this ministry.
- ❖ Attend the Men's Shelter volunteer training.
- ❖ Attend meetings of the Valparaiso Men's Shelter Coalition.
- ❖ Attend regular meetings of the small group.
- ❖ Help prepare for the meetings.
- ❖ Help the Facilitator recruit volunteers for the Men's Shelter.
- ❖ Send reminder e-mails and make reminder phone calls to volunteers.
- ❖ Meet with the Facilitator to discuss the small group.
- ❖ When possible, take the opportunity to attend small group leaders' meetings.
- ❖ Stay in contact with Pastor and your small group mentor at Christ Lutheran.
- ❖ Fill in for the Facilitator when needed.

Churches that Serve as Sites

Sunday: Valparaiso Mennonite – 1305 Silhavy Road

Monday: Valparaiso Community – 352 Chicago Street






Tuesday: Liberty Bible – 824 North Calumet Avenue – Chesterton

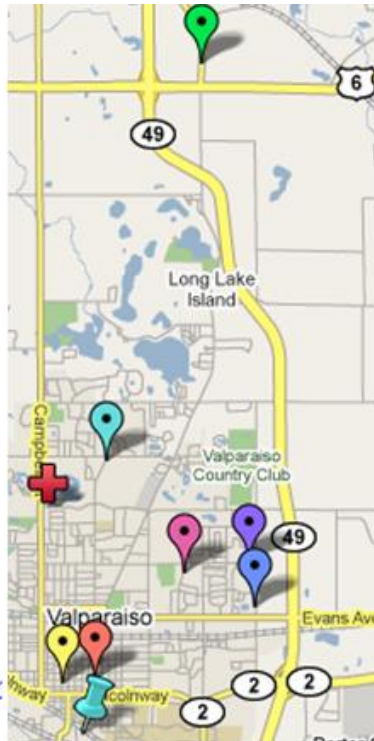
Wednesday: First Presbyterian – 3401 Valparaiso Street

Thursday: Grace New Testament – 157 Lafayette Street

Friday: Valparaiso Nazarene – 2702 East Glendale Boulevard

Saturday: Immanuel Lutheran – 1700 Monticello Park Drive

-  [Valparaiso Mennonite](#)
Sundays
-  [Valparaiso Community](#)
Mondays
-  [Liberty Bible](#)
Tuesdays
-  [First Presbyterian](#)
Wednesdays
-  [Grace New Testament](#)
Thursdays
-  [Valparaiso Nazarene](#)
Fridays
-  [Immanuel Lutheran](#)
Saturdays
-  [Christ Lutheran](#)
-  [New Creation Men's Center](#)
653 Axe Avenue



Created with
Google Maps®

Christ Lutheran
and
New Creation
added
for reference

*information accurate as of August 2009

Becoming a Site

Seven churches providing the sites for six months is a large undertaking for each site. In addition, approximately 14 churches are needed for the shelter to expand operations from October to April to year round. Adding another site would relieve some of the pressure from the existing churches and possibly extend the operating months of the men's shelter. It would also provide a way for us to become even more involved in our community. Certainly, we cannot do this in our current facilities and definitely not during our construction period, but while we are growing into our new building, we could also grow in our ministries with the Valparaiso Men's Shelter.

Here are some thoughts on what needs to happen for us to become one of the site churches:

- ❖ Certain fire code requirements are necessary for the church to become a host site. They need records of who is in charge, who is next-in-charge, and an overall head count of all in the facility. "No smoking" signs must be posted. For more questions, contact the Valparaiso Fire Department at (219) 462-8325.
- ❖ Be aware that some insurance adjustments may be necessary.
- ❖ Consider preparing a legal release for volunteers to sign that would specifically protect Christ Lutheran.
- ❖ Prepare a site plan for what areas of the facility will be available for the men. **The kitchen needs to be off-limits to the men staying at the shelter site.** (Whether or not it's off limits to some of the volunteers as well, that's up to you!)
- ❖ Review emergency preparedness procedures with all volunteers.
- ❖ The Volunteer Facilitator or Co-Facilitator needs to contact the rest of the churches to schedule a volunteer training session at Christ Lutheran.
- ❖ Showers are not a requirement because they can use those at New Creation.
- ❖ Each site is given 15 or more bed mats to store at their facility. The site is responsible for getting sheets and blankets for those beds as well as laundering them. Having a washer and dryer on site would be incredibly helpful for this. Hotels rotate out their sheets and blankets on a semi-regular basis. This might be a good place to look for donations.
- ❖ Men must register to be admitted to the shelter. Specially trained volunteers will sit at the designated entrance of the site from 7-10pm and process them.

FAQs

Q: Why does the Valparaiso Men's Shelter only run from October 15th to April 15th?

A: The fire and zoning codes allow a building that is commercially zoned to hold overnight "residents" for 30 calendar days. Through the course of the six months, 24 of those 30 calendar days are spent on the shelter. With the addition of lock-ins and other overnight functions, the host site churches rapidly approach those 30 days in the course of a year. Other options have been looked at for a Spring/Summer shelter, but this is what is currently feasible.

Q: What are some of the things that I can buy at the New Creation Resale Shop?

A: The New Creation Resale Shop sells furniture, appliances, kitchenware, and vehicles. They will also provide delivery options for some items. The showroom is open Monday through Friday, 8am to 6pm, and Saturday from 10am until 6pm.

Q: Does the Resale Shop take donations for things to be refurbished and sold?

A: They accept donations of high-quality, gently-used furniture, appliances (large & small), kitchenware, outdoor equipment, office equipment, and vehicles. They do not, however, accept clothing. They receive donations during the same hours that the showroom is open and they are also able to pick up some donations.

Q: What are some of the jobs the workers from New Creation can do?

A: New Creation's Day Labor employees work for \$12 an hour and are selected, screened, bonded, and insured through New Creation. They are available for inventory, stocking, construction, painting, drywall, framing, landscaping, and cleaning. In addition to these jobs, the New Creation Clean-Up Crew can also provide an estimate for clean-up and haul away of unwanted items (except yard waste and hazardous materials)

Q: How much is this ministry going to cost the congregation?

A: At the initial levels, the expenditures are going to come from those who are donating and from the volunteers. As the ministry grows and if the church decides to undertake the ministry of becoming a host site, then various expenses will be incurred from having the building open to a greater extent for the overnight hours.

Q: What about security?

A: There have been no issues with security because of the screening process. The Valparaiso Police Department is aware of the men's shelter and they are notified of the host sites and schedule. They are readily available in case of any problems.

Other Information

Dial 2-1-1

2-1-1 is a developing, nation-wide service sponsored by the United Way and the Alliance for Information and Referral Systems (AIRS). The purpose of the service is connecting people with the various social services that are available in the area by dialing 2-1-1 on any phone. They provide information on shelters, food pantries, employment assistance, food stamps, affordable housing options, assistance for the elderly, and addiction prevention programs.

Valparaiso and the surrounding communities are fortunate enough to be served by the Northwest Indiana Community Action group, located in Crown Point, Indiana. They run the 2-1-1 service from 8:30am until 5:00pm. After those hours, callers are transferred to the Connect2help 2-1-1 service located in Indianapolis. In addition to staffing the 2-1-1 service, the Northwest Indiana Community Action group serves as the Area Agency on Aging, assisting the disabled and elderly with in-home services, nutrition, family caregiver support and other issues.

New Creation Men's Center

The New Creation Center off of Axe Avenue helps men experiencing homelessness out of their current situation and gives them tools to enter or re-enter the working world. In addition to providing shower facilities, kitchens, and storage, the center provides additional services including employment assistance, internet access, and the job opportunities listed earlier. The Center also provides case management and counseling.

Contact Information

New Creation Men's Center
Tom Isakson, Executive Director
653 Axe Avenue
Valparaiso, IN 46383
(219) 548-3548
www.NCBAI.org
tomi@NCBAI.org

Northwest Indiana Community Action
5240 Fountain Drive
Crown Point, IN 46307
(219) 794-1829 or (800) 826-7871
www.nwi-ca.com
director@nwi-ca.com
www.211us.org

Additional Questions on the Valparaiso Men's Shelter?

Contact Pastor Mario Bustos, Valparaiso Mennonite Church
(219) 464-8187
mariobustos@valpomennonite.org



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