



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**WINTER SHELTER
FOR PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS
TO RETURN TO SMITHFIELD UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, DOWNTOWN, DEC. 3**
Shelter is open every night 7 p.m. to 7 a.m., Nov. 15, 2018 through March 15, 2019

PITTSBURGH (November 30, 2018) – [Pittsburgh Mercy’s Operation Safety Net](#)[®] announces the [Winter Shelter](#) for persons who are experiencing homelessness will return to its original location, [Smithfield United Church of Christ](#), 620 Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15222 (Downtown), on Monday, December 3, 2018, at 7 p.m.

When the shelter opened Nov. 15 for the 2018-19 winter season, due to maintenance work at Smithfield United Church of Christ, the shelter was relocated temporarily at [Shepherd’s Heart Fellowship and Veteran’s Home](#) in Uptown.

“We, at Pittsburgh Mercy, thank Shepherd’s Heart Fellowship and Veteran’s Home, Fr. Mike Wurschmidt, and the Uptown community for hosting the Winter Shelter on a temporary, interim basis during our time of critical need,” stated [Brian Matous](#), homeless services supervisor at Pittsburgh Mercy. “We’re grateful to Shepherd’s Heart and Smithfield United Church of Christ for being such amazing community partners and for joining us in our mission and ministry to provide shelter to those who are most in need – one of the original works of mercy,” he added.

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The Winter Shelter, a low-barrier shelter serving both men and women, is open every night 7 p.m. to 7 a.m., including weekends and holidays and regardless of the temperature, through March 15, 2019.

Men are asked to enter the shelter through the church's side entrance on Strawberry Way. Women are asked to enter through the double doors on Smithfield Street.

Services include a warm, dry place to sleep; a hot meal served nightly; access to showers and laundry facilities; and connections to housing and other essential human services through the [Allegheny Link](#), Pittsburgh Mercy, and other community health and human service providers in Allegheny County.

Funding for the Winter Shelter is made possible by the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Pittsburgh Mercy's Operation Safety Net, an Allegheny County Economic Development Emergency Solutions Grant, and Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield.

[Northside Homeless Alliance](#) coordinates meals at the Winter Shelter. To volunteer or contribute a meal, contact [Charles Chapman](#), chairman and executive director of L.I.V.I.N.G. Ministry, at chapman@livingministry.org or 412-302-1678.

Donations to the Winter Shelter may be made via Pittsburgh Mercy's website, www.pittsburghmercy.org, or mailed to Pittsburgh Mercy's Development Office, 9983 Perry Highway, Suite 208, Wexford, PA 15090-9297. Please do not mail cash. Checks can be made payable to "Pittsburgh Mercy." Please note "Winter Shelter" in the memo blank. For more information, contact [Connie Murray](#), director of Development at Pittsburgh Mercy, at CMurray@pittsburghmercy.org or 724-934-3537.

In-kind donations of new hats, scarves, gloves, socks, boots, winter coats, toiletries, and personal hygiene items are appreciated and accepted by appointment. To schedule an appointment, email Operationssafetynet@pittsburghmercy.org or call 412-232-5739, ext. 2.

To volunteer time or offer services at the Winter Shelter, please contact [Genevieve Gigandet](#) at GGigandet@pittsburghmercy.org or 412-232-5739, ext. 4.

About Pittsburgh Mercy's Operation Safety Net[®]

[Pittsburgh Mercy's Operation Safety Net[®]](#) is an award-winning, innovative medical and social service outreach program for the unsheltered homeless population in Allegheny County. It strives to address the circumstances which undermine the behavioral and physical health of

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persons served by creating avenues for people who are homeless to access the medical and social services that are necessary for them to improve their quality of life. Since its founding in 1992, Operation Safety Net has reached thousands of individuals where they live – in camps along riverbanks, in alleyways, or beneath bridges and highway overpasses. In 2017, we served more than 1,600 persons experiencing or at risk of homelessness. We helped 579 of them to obtain safe housing. In doing so, Operation Safety Net not only assists with providing health care and affordable housing, but also offers this vulnerable population hope, dignity, and a sense of community. Operation Safety Net is part of [Pittsburgh Mercy](#) and [Trinity Health](#), serving in the tradition of the [Sisters of Mercy](#). To learn more, or to make a donation in support of our important work in the community, visit www.pittsburghmercy.org.

About Pittsburgh Mercy

[Pittsburgh Mercy](#), a member of [Trinity Health](#), serving in the tradition of the [Sisters of Mercy](#), is a person-centered, population-based, trauma-informed community health and wellness provider. Pittsburgh Mercy, home to the region's only Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic, is also one of the largest nonprofit organizations and employers in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Pittsburgh Mercy includes Bethlehem Haven, McAuley Ministries, Pittsburgh Mercy Behavioral Health, Pittsburgh Mercy Community Health, Pittsburgh Mercy Intellectual Disabilities Services, the Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program, Pittsburgh Mercy's Operation Safety Net®, and Pittsburgh Mercy Family Health Center. Together, these Pittsburgh Mercy programs and their 1,700 employees serve more than 33,000 individuals annually at 60+ locations in Southwestern Pennsylvania. To learn more about [Pittsburgh Mercy](#), or to make a donation in support of its important work in the community, visit www.pittsburghmercy.org.

About the Northside Homeless Alliance

Using the tools of advocacy, education, and community engagement, the [Northside Homeless Alliance](#) exists as a collaboration of organizations to end homelessness on the Northside of Pittsburgh. As a collaboration, the core objectives of the Northside Homeless Alliance are to develop meaningful policy change that supports the alleviation of homelessness; use evidence-based practices in providing direct services to the homeless; educate and engage the community in caring for the homeless; and foster open communication between the homeless and other community members. To learn more about [Northside Homeless Alliance](#) or to make a donation in support of its important work in the community, visit www.northsidestreetguide.org.

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