

Can we help each other?

Poverty. Hunger. War. Homelessness. Aids. Global warming. Racial injustice. Sometimes (okay, nearly all the time!) the world's problems seem so overwhelming, so big, so unapproachable. Yet, we know that as followers of Christ we are called to act. But how? The needs are so great that getting started feels like taking a sip of water from a fire hose -- you're likely to get knocked down!

At First Presbyterian Asheville, we invite you to participate with Room in the Inn (RITI), a ministry for homeless women hosted by our church four times per year. This you can do! Step up to start helping humanity.

In a January 2007 count, 635 homeless people were identified in Asheville. This includes those living in some type of emergency shelter (like RITI) as well as those living on the streets.

"Our main business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance but to do what lies clearly at hand." - Thomas Carlyle



To volunteer, contact Associate Pastor
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ROOM IN THE INN

*An Interfaith Ministry
of Shelter for
Homeless Women*

Program Information Guide

ROOM IN THE INN: THE WHAT, WHY AND HOW?

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WHAT IS ROOM IN THE INN?

Room in the Inn (RITI) began in 2001 as an emergency shelter for homeless women provided by several faith groups in the Asheville-Buncombe community. Rather than being located at one permanent site, the shelter rotates on a weekly basis, utilizing the physical structures and spiritual resources of the participating churches. The RITI churches work in conjunction with Homeward Bound's A-HOPE Center which provides referral and screening of participants and other back-up services.

"... I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me... Truly, I say to you, as you did to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."

- Matthew 25:35,40 RSV

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WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR R.I.T.I.?

RITI is for the women. Homelessness is the product, obviously, of poverty and poor social support—but most homeless women also suffer from some combination of mental illness, substance abuse, and domestic violence. RITI is the opportunity to give hurting humans a safe and warm place to sleep, a hot dinner, a quick breakfast, and a bag lunch. It is also the opportunity to offer a friendly smile, a hearty laugh, a concerned heart. This is how we share Christ's love. Amazingly, people who share of themselves usually find that they receive more than they give. This is where we find Christ!



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HOW DO I HELP WITH R.I.T.I.?

First Presbyterian hosts RITI about every twelve weeks. The ministry relies almost entirely upon the participation of church members in a variety of roles:

- **Set-up/Clean-up:** Each Sunday, mattresses are moved from one church to the next. We need a small team to help put out linens & pillows and set-up the dining space.
- **Transportation:** Guests are driven between FPC and A-Hope in the morning and late afternoon each day.
- **Food:** Volunteers bring dinner for the women every evening.
- **Hospitality:** Church members serve as dinner and/or overnight hosts.

Some families have served together as dinner hosts, set-up volunteers, etc. Children learn so much when they experience faith being put into action!