

FPCO Security

The Security office is located in the parking garage of the Clayton Life Center. They can be called at ext. 2121 from any on-campus phone, especially with the assistance of the hostesses at the EMC lobby desk. Often you can visually find a FPCO security officer walking the premises. They also carry a cell phone; the number is 407.466.3497.

FPCO Pastors

During the week, pastors are available for prayer and counseling; appointments are preferred and can be made through the EMC receptionist. Utmost care should

be taken to exhaust other avenues of help before appealing to a pastor on a Sunday morning. Never ask the pastor preaching on a particular Sunday morning for assistance. The amount of work expected from our pastoral staff is greatly compromised for each and every request that comes to our church due to our unique opportunity in serving a downtown locale. These systems have been put into place to make sure that appropriate care is given. There are, however, elders and deacons on duty each Sunday to assist with these policies. They can usually be found at the EMC Welcome Desk, as well as the Angel Wing Welcome Booth.

Compassion Corner

FPCO's Ministry to the Homeless

One of our major mission initiatives at First Presbyterian Church of Orlando, the Compassion Corner is located at 425 Magnolia Avenue, across from the court house. This ministry seeks to win the homeless of Orlando to Jesus Christ. Through one-on-one evangelism, group Bible study, Christian videos and friendship, the focus is to introduce Christ and teach the word of God. Individuals needing information on community services and Christian ministries are assisted by referrals by the many faithful volunteers that serve.

General Hours of Operation

Monday - Friday 8-11am & 1-3pm

Hours can vary depending on needs and availability.

Compassion Corner Ministries:**One-on-One Discipleship**

Various leaders take one homeless person at a time and work with them on

a personal basis to assist with housing, job training, spiritual growth, etc.

The Good News Breakfast

The Good News Breakfast is held every Sunday morning at 5:45am in Lee Fellowship Hall, where an average of 250 homeless are fed. The men of the Central Care Mission, many of whom are just off the streets, serve the breakfast following a time of worship and a sermon. All are welcome to come eat as well as come serve.

Homeless Columbarium

A place of rest is offered free of charge to the homeless following their death and cremation. The Columbarium is located at the corner of Edington Way and Jackson Street attached to the Clayton Life Center. The church provides pastoral care, the sacraments, and funeral service free of charge to friends of the Corner who have passed from this age to the next.

Responding to Orlando's Homeless in the Manner of Christ

By Dr. Case Thorp, Associate Pastor for Mission and Evangelism

A Christian always wants to be Christ-like in the way that he or she treats others. When approached by a homeless person, or one with clearly evident needs beyond our immediate ability to help, we can feel overwhelmed such that we avoid a homeless person, give guilt offerings of few dollars, or talk a bit and end up doing nothing.

Some of us, as the Scripture says, are equipped by the Holy Spirit for a variety of roles, administrators, prophets, teachers, etc. On top of that, very few are trained to specifically handle the needs of those that live on our streets.

Quite frankly, I realize that I have had more formal training in how to lead an attorney to Christ than find a hungry person a job. Although I may not be the best trained person for the job, I know that members and ministries of our church are. Our ignorance and dis-ease should not keep someone from being treated as Jesus Christ among us. This informational piece is designed to help you find the help you need to direct a person from the street.



On an annual basis, over 3,000 people dropped by the Compassion corner for a visit. They come to talk, for fellowship, to attend two daily Bible studies, or to learn of community social services. About 100 homeless men and women are helped into drug and alcohol rehabilitation facilities annually.

Four Rules of Thumb

1 Affirm the “image of God” implanted into each human as a child of God. This means looking someone in the eye, shaking their hand, and answering their questions as best and as honestly as you can. The rest of the world turns in disgust from most homeless; perhaps you can be the only one in a long time to show them the love of Christ.

2 Offer the help that you can, given the amount of time you have available to help. If you can walk with someone to a restaurant, buy them a meal, and learn their life story, great! Go for it. We have many in our church that look forward to and embrace such opportunities. If you can't, honestly say, “I'm sorry, I'm due somewhere else right now. But, you can do _____ to meet your need.”

3 Do not feel needlessly guilty for a person's situation or your level of response. There is a huge and complex system throughout Orlando to help get people off the streets, get off drugs, and deal with very tragic life situations. The question is whether a person is able to be served and to be accountable to allow the system to help them. Situations of drug addiction or mental instability always require an extra sympathy and level of understanding.

First Presbyterian gives over \$100,000 each year to the issue of homelessness. Your tax dollars and offering dollars are working hard on these causes. Be at peace and be fully present to the person immediately before you.

If a person has a need after the operational hours of assisting agencies, even the Compassion Corner, encourage someone to find a place of shelter and return to the

assisting agency in the morning. More than likely the person has been on the streets for several nights and one more is doable. Never take an unknown person to your home or even into your car.

If you feel called by God through an experience to learn more about homelessness and find ways to serve this community with the love of Christ, please be in touch with the Mission office. We'll be glad to connect you to mission partners doing great things for those on the streets.

4 Never, ever give a person money. There are many outlets that provide assistance that also provide trained professionals who know if a person's articulated need is their true need. Money is often just a band-aid for deeper problems that you probably are not equipped nor desiring to handle. Cash will almost always be used for purposes other than that which is presented to you. I have been burned more times than not and have learned the hard way that giving cash is really about easing my guilt than about helping a person get off the streets and into a productive lifestyle.

As well, when you give cash due to your ‘big heart’ you create a dependency for our church that others have to meet the next time the person returns. You are gone, but they know and have gotten the ‘word on the street’ that FPCO will give out hard cash. We need to do our best to direct those with extreme needs to the proper sources of help rather than take matters into our own hands. I frequently and guiltlessly say, although not without great mercy, “I'm sorry, but I'm not authorized to give you cash. But, my friend, I can direct you to a place that can help your immediate and long term needs.”

Who is Welcomed On Campus and Who is Not

The same rules apply to the homeless as would apply to any other guest on our campus. On



Sunday mornings or any other evening of the week anyone is welcome on campus for the purposes of worship, study, and service. No one is allowed to beg on the sidewalks for money or approach our members directly for money.

During the week anyone is allowed on our campus who is here for a legitimate reason: meeting with a member of staff, attending a church sponsored or church-hosted event, inquiring about programs and services, etc.

If, however, you observe someone at any time of the week asking for money, please contact FPCO Security so that they can inform the individual that such practices are not allowed on campus.

If you are approached for money, please follow the rules of thumb listed above. Following your contact, please see that the person either leaves campus or goes to where you have directed him or her. Since we have hundreds of children on our campus daily, it is imperative that all guests are where they should legitimately be. Always escort, or have Security escort, a guest if there is any question in your mind as to their ability, willingness, and agreement to follow through as you have suggested.

Sources of Assistance

The Good Samaritan Fund

The Good Samaritan Fund is designed to help members of the church in emergency situations like a rent payment, medical bill, or special assistance. Grants from this fund are given per person once per lifetime and are allocated by the Good Samaritan Fund committee. Money is not immediately available through this fund. Applications are necessary and can be obtained from the Congregational Life Ministry.

Downtown Street Information Cards

Downtown Street Information Cards are available indicating the place and time

meals are available and shelters and lodging throughout the Orlando area. These cards can be obtained in the EMC Welcome Center.

The Christian Service Center Mission Partner with FPCO on Central Boulevard

Family Emergency Services is a program for the working poor (those with addresses) to get financial assistance for emergency needs. 407.425.2523