

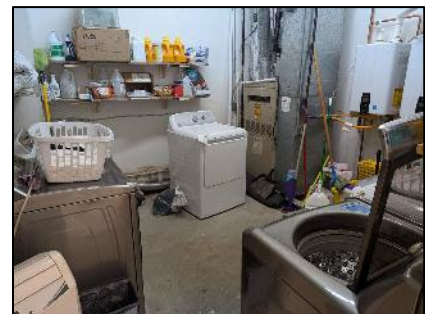
## **Memo: Tucker First Cold Weather Refuge and Shower Ministry**

### **RE: Financial Support for Fiscal Year 2026**

**Cold Weather Refuge (CWR):** Ten years ago, members of our church realized that unhoused people in our community were without any shelter on sub-freezing nights and decided that Tucker First United Methodist Church facilities might be used to provide a safe, secure and warm refuge for those individuals. In coordination with Dekalb Fire Marshall, we opened our Activities Center, a stand-alone gymnasium on our property, as an overnight refuge on dangerously cold nights: providing hot food, cots, and overnight volunteer supervision. Safety has always been a key requirement, including reports as directed by the Dekalb Fire Marshall for trained volunteers to be awake at all times throughout the night who log their observations on an hourly basis. Security has always been a key element of this program and all visitors are screened (including use of a magnetometer wand) during intake by off duty Dekalb Police officers who are paid from CWR funds and any weapons, flammable materials or other inappropriate items are removed before entry into the facility. Families with children, and visitors with illnesses are provided hotel stays at our expense. Ten years later, we are still providing these services. Last year we were fortunate to receive some discretionary funding from Commissioner Patrick, but otherwise this Cold Weather Refuge has been and continues to be supported by financial donations from the community and volunteers.



**Lunch, Shower, and Laundry (LSL):** Three years ago, members of our church realized that we also had shower facilities that might be used to provide showers for unhoused persons on Sunday afternoons. This request was the beginning of our Sunday afternoon lunch and shower program. Realizing there also was a need for persons to wash their clothes, three washers and dryers were donated and we also have provided a laundry service. Now, every Sunday from 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm, visitors can receive a large hot meal, a shower, laundry, and sit in a heated/cooled indoor space as a respite from weather and stress. Most of the food is donated by Tucker restaurants, including the Magnolia Room Cafeteria. All of the labor to prepare and serve meals and coordinate showers and laundry is provided from volunteers from the church and our community. Security is provided throughout the time by off-duty DeKalb County Police Officer who are paid from LSL funds.



### **We are stretched thin:**

1. Our CWR demand has increased: we have more people showing up on cold nights than we can safely serve (30 per night is our safe maximum).
2. We have over 70 people showing up every Sunday for lunch, showers, and laundry. We have one shower and three used residential-sized washers and dryers.

3. Our small leadership team is overwhelmed with supporting over 80 events per year (30+ CWR nights, 52 LSL events). That equates to over 4000 meals served, over 1000 showers, over 1000 loads of laundry, and over 800 times that a person was given shelter in dangerous weather.
4. Over the last two years, the CWR has opened more than our usual 15-20 days due to colder winters (30 days in the 2024/2025 season and 26 days so far in 2025/2026) resulting in increased operational costs and volunteer workload.
5. **We love our many community volunteers and donations of food and clothing and we do not want to change this model. It brings the Tucker and DeKalb community together and, in addition to the benefits experienced by our guests in need (many of whom simply need a “leg up” in a time of need, it also fights against stigmas regarding poverty, mental health, addiction, and social biases. But we need financial support to ensure that our services continue.**



**What we are requesting to continue operating:**

Annual Operations Supplemental Budget:	<b>\$51,000</b>
Plumbing and bathroom improvements:	<b>\$9,000</b>
Paid Part-Time Position of Compassion Ministries Coordinator:	<b>\$30,000</b>
Two interns:	<b>\$4,000</b>
<b>TOTAL: \$94,000</b>	

**What else do we need to improve our ability to safely meet expected demand in fiscal year 2026?:**

- Activity Center Maintenance and Repair (floors, HVAC, electrical upgrade for commercial washers and dryers, Doors, Security Cameras)
- Three commercial washers and dryers
- Activity Center kitchen upgrades

We are thankful for our DeKalb County Leadership who (1) support efforts to keep all of its people safe and (2) support pathways for all individuals to build and share meaningful lives.