PACEM’s Mission: To bring together the faith community of the greater Charlottesville area to provide temporary shelter, compassionate support, and access to services to homeless individuals, so they can move to a stable housing solution. This work can only be achieved by forging partnerships in the larger community.

Welcome to PACEM’s sheltering family, and thank you for considering to offer hospitality to our neighbors who are homeless in your congregational “home.” You are providing a “shelter of last resort” in our community. Without your roof, warmth, and kindness, homeless men and women without other options face inhospitable and often dangerous conditions on the streets on cold winter nights.

Your participation is important to us. You help to shape PACEM’s mission and strengthen our sheltering community. Your service is important to the health of individuals in need and to our community as a whole.

Frequently Asked Questions about Hosting PACEM’s Shelter
(An updated manual for volunteers is distributed each October)

What is a typical schedule for a night of shelter?
5:30-5:45 p.m. - PACEM Guest Intake – Neighbors in need of shelter go to PACEM’s Intake, located in the lower level of The Haven (112 West Market Street) at the corner of First and Market Streets in downtown Charlottesville. A PACEM-employed driver transports guests on a JAUNT bus to the shelter between 5:45 and 6:45 p.m. Guests may not go directly to the shelter site without going through nightly intake. On occasion, with prior approval, a guest may arrive directly at the site from work. The PACEM staff member will be notified if late arrival of a guest is anticipated. (Estimated nightly guest count is 40-45 men and 10-20 women.)

6:45 p.m. - Dinner – Shelter Host provides donated, sit-down dinner for PACEM guests and volunteers. Volunteers are encouraged to dine with guests, engaging in conversation.

7:15 pm Evening Activities - Volunteers engage in conversation, evening games, artwork, or watching a movie with guests. Some congregations provide a structured activity, i.e., guided journal writing, bingo, a craft, etc. All activities are optional to guests.

9:30 p.m. Lights Out for Women

11:00 p.m. Lights Out for Men

5:30-6:30 a.m. Simple Breakfast foods may be provided (Coffee is essential!) and Check Out Guests begin getting up around 5:00 a.m. Some guests check out on their own in the morning, not requiring transportation to The Haven. PACEM’s bus will arrive in time to transport guests to The Haven by 6:30 a.m. The Haven provides a hot breakfast each morning, but morning coffee at the host site is essential.

We’ve signed up to host a week of shelter, now what?
Designate a Key Volunteer to be the liaison between PACEM and your congregation. Provide key volunteer contact information to PACEM’s Program Director at volunteer@pacemshelter.org. Please provide name, email address, and best phone number to call (cell phone is preferred if actively using). You must have a phone number to call the week prior to and the week of your shelter. Your number will not be published or distributed outside the Key Volunteer list.
Promote PACEM within your congregation. This will help with Volunteer Recruitment, Community Relations, and with generating Financial Support for PACEM. 60 days prior to your shelter week is a good time to schedule a brief presentation with your Missions Committee or at a Sunday service. A month to a month and a half prior, provide volunteer sign up sheets with PACEM display items, including shelter photos. PACEM will provide more detailed information as needed.

How many volunteers will our shelter need?
The main source of volunteers generally comes directly from your congregation. Partner Congregations and Community Volunteers are ways to engage additional volunteers. The Key Volunteer is the lead organizer and should not be responsible for doing all of the work. The following are suggested volunteer teams, which can be helpful in covering all shelter hospitality needs:
- Shelter Set Up and Shelter Transfer (Saturday mornings) 5-7 volunteers for each
  (Shelter Transfer on the final Saturday requires volunteer(s) with truck or van)
- Facility Maintenance – kitchen and bathroom clean up (daily)
- Meal Coordination (dinner, evening snacks, simple breakfast foods, and coffee)
- Overnight Shelter Volunteers spend the night sleeping on site – 1 or 2 per night
- Evening Activity Coordination – games, movies, artwork, etc. - 2-3 per night
- Laundry – on site if available and at the end of shelter week (transfer of bedding and towels to Albemarle-Charlottesville Regional Jail Inmate Workforce)
(Women’s shelters use up to 50 volunteers and men’s shelters as many as 150 per week.)

Does PACEM provide Volunteer Training?
PACEM provides two volunteer training opportunities:
1. In early October, PACEM provides a formal training session for host and partner congregations. Updated Volunteer Manuals are distributed at this gathering, and guest speakers provide valuable information about mental illness, substance abuse, and nutrition, pertaining specifically to our guest population.
2. PACEM’s Board of Directors and Staff can provide on-site shelter training prior to your week of shelter. To set up a volunteer training session at your shelter site, contact volunteer@pacemshelter.org.

Is there a way to ask questions and share information with other sheltering congregations?
PACEM’s Host and Partner Congregations Google Group – Please sign up for this essential shelter communications tool by contacting volunteer@pacemshelter.org. Also, PACEM requests that key volunteers provide a written review of your shelter week – important feedback which helps to shape our shelter mission.

Does PACEM provide on-site shelter staff?
Paid, trained shelter staff is on site from the time guests arrive to your shelter site until they leave the next morning. PACEM staff oversees shelter safety and are certified in First Aid and CPR. Should you have questions or concerns about guests, consult with PACEM staff. They wear a yellow PACEM t-shirt and/or blue PACEM staff vest and an ID while on duty. Any other PACEM staff or board member on site will wear a PACEM name badge for identification.

What about donated goods, clothing, socks, hats, sundries, etc.?
PACEM recommends that shelter sites provide sundries of shampoo, soap, deodorant, toothpaste, and toothbrushes upon request. Rather than holding a clothing drive, we encourage the use of the Clothing Closet and Clothing Center, which provide vouchers to PACEM guests in need of coats and clothing at no charge. Utilizing existing resources in our community is a best practice. They have racks, storage, and accept vouchers from PACEM. They provide opportunities for our guests to acquire what they need most and what fits.