

## **Connections Homeless Shelter Procedure Christ the King (CTK)**

### **Purpose:**

The Connections Homeless Shelter houses homeless individuals in the evening winter hours. They offer an evening meal and a place to sleep. The clients, referred to as guests, enter the shelter at 5:30-6:00pm and leave the following morning around 7:30am. Churches, service groups, organizations, schools and individuals in the Greater Mankato Area assist in providing and serving the evening meal. The Service Outreach Committee of Christ the King oversees this community and congregational project.

The Service Outreach Committee designates a CTK contact-liaison volunteer for the Connections homeless shelter project.

**Current Liaison: Mary Jo Menden 507-327-5838 justjomenden@gmail.com**

**Connections Address: 220 E Hickory St., Mankato, Mn, 56001**

**Connections Phone Number: 507-995-4952**

### **CTK liaison responsibilities:**

1. The liaison will share contact information with the **Connections Logistics Coordinator. Currently (9/1/2025), Julie Brewer at 507-720-6907**
2. In August\*, the liaison will contact Connections to request dates (3 weeks) that the congregation will be responsible for supplying food and servers to the Connections shelter. Currently, CTK commits to one week in November, one week in January and one week in March.
  - \*The liaison may receive an email from the Coordinator prior to August alerting the liaison that the dates can be secured.
3. Request a QR code and link to the specific CTK Sign-up Genius. These will be passed on to CTK staff for publication in various media avenues. Secure the necessary volunteers using Signup Genius.
  - a. Signup Genius will have a designated signup for CTK. It guides the volunteer to sign up for meal items and/or serving opportunities.
4. The liaison will monitor Signup Genius and report monthly to the Service Outreach Committee.
  - a. Monitoring will allow the liaison to alert the congregation via the pastors and just-in-time communications as to the current state of volunteers should help be needed in fulfilling the commitment.
5. Give monthly reports to the Service Outreach Committee of any changes to the Connections situation, aka new housing, new requests, etc.

### **Requesting volunteers using the CTK office procedure:**

1. **Six to eight weeks prior to a commitment week** Request a QR code and Sign-up Genius link from the Connections Logistics Coordinator. The QR code or link allows a volunteer to register for meal preparation and serving.

2. Place an electronic CTK request to publicize the upcoming Connections commitment week across all forms of CTK media and communication avenues.
  - a. Go to the CTK website, [ctkmankato.org](http://ctkmankato.org) using your browser (aka, google or safari). Click on **Discover** for a drop-down. Choose **Media Submission Requests**. Include the link and QR code received in step 1 above. The CTK office staff will work off this submission to publicize the need for volunteers to provide and serve food during our designated week.
3. If sign-ups are slow:
  - a. Ask for an **email blast** to all congregants with the **Sign-Up Genius link and QR code**.
  - b. Have pastors highlight the need in their opening remarks.
    - i. Each day has 10 signup opportunities. CTK covers 7 days; therefore, there are 70 opportunities for the week. **It is helpful to give the Pastors the current state of signups, (Example 33 of 70 are covered)**

### **Meal preparers sign up:**

1. Provide hearty meals that feed 50 people
2. Have food at the shelter by 5:45.
  - a. Food providers can pull into the alley between Wells Fargo and Connections. Carts are available to use. Staff usually help with unloading. Guests may offer to help but are not allowed inside until Connections staff give the ok.
  - b. If there are no staff members in the entrance atrium, call the staff or ring the doorbell. It is ok to call from your car and wait for a staff member to appear at the door. Currently the number is 507-995-4952 (as of 9/1/2025). Introduce yourself as a volunteer.
3. If you are splitting the main entrée with another person, make the same menu item, i.e., make the same casserole, or entrée. Offering two different menu choices results in guests asking for one of each. It is uncomfortable for the server to have to decline the request, so we ask that only one entree be offered.
  - a. You may reach out to friends to make an entrée or meal as a group or cater a meal as a group. Choose a name or title to designate your group when doing the signup (Example: CTK Cooks)

### **Meal Servers:**

1. Servers are to report by 5:30pm.
  - a. Servers may call the staff while at the door or from their car to say they have arrived and need to have the door opened.
  - b. Currently the number is 507-995-4952 (as of 9/1/2025).
2. Sign-in and out upon arriving and departing. There is log in a binder for this purpose.
3. There will be a serving table in the kitchen. This table is pulled across the kitchen door to facilitate serving.
4. Place dinner plates and silverware on the serving table.
  - a. Wrap silverware in a napkin for ease of handing out.

5. Gloves are required and are available in the kitchen
6. Aprons are available.
7. All food is served by a server. Utensils are handed off by the server.
8. Place a milk container on ice and leave it on the hallway table by the drinking cups.
9. Connections staff will announce when to start serving (usually by 6pm)
  - a. Second helpings are offered after all have eaten. The Connections staff will let you know when seconds can be handed out.
10. Guests will place their dirty dishes in a soapy bucket in the hall. Periodically, change out the buckets so they have room for their dirty dishes.
11. Set aside meals as needed. Connection staff will give direction on this. It is usually because some guests are coming in late from work or other commitments.
12. Fill the dishwasher and start it. Dishwasher pods are in the cupboard above the dishwasher. Clean all dishes that do not fit in the dishwasher.
13. Sweep the floor, mop, if necessary, wipe off counters. Dirty rags are tossed under the sink.
14. Either take leftovers with **you\*\*** or package them up with dates on them and leave them behind. If there are leftovers, the Connections staff are offered a meal. Staff decide whether to eat according to their comfort level in accepting food.
  - a. \*\* Connection staff may ask that leftovers be preserved for delivery to the drop-in center on Front Street. Staff take care of this the following day.

Notes:

- There are usually “extras” such as chips, fruit snacks, etc. that can be offered to children.
- The staff will let you know if it is OK to provide anything not on the menu, such as PBJ, butter, juice, etc.
- It is helpful to look in the frig at the start of the shift to see what is available, should there be a request for something such as jelly or butter.**

**Additional Notes:**

Garbage is taken care of by Connections staff.

Bathrooms are replenished and cleaned by Connections staff.

Stay resilient and use your judgment. The staff are grateful and helpful. They assume we know what to do and will give little direction unless asked. If you are unsure, ask.

The clients express their appreciation and understand that we may not always be fully informed of all regulations and may need to consult with the Connections staff as needed.

Prepared by Jo Menden (507-327-5838) First edition: 9/1/2025

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