Dear {Faith Community or known name of representative of Community},

We’d like to introduce ourselves to you and your faith community. We are the part of the Coalition to End Homelessness of Pierce County—[Brief description].

Due to the Coalition’s hard work, the hard work of many non-profit, grassroots and faith communities, and some collaboration with city and county officials, many, though not all, lives were saved during our latest heat wave. Hot weather, low air quality due to fires, and cold weather are all predictable disasters that put the most vulnerable, poor and/or unhoused at risk. The heat not only impacted thousands living outside in tents or in their cars, but many also housed in PNW built housing without air conditioning. Only a small percentage of Pierce County residents have either access to air conditioning or the resources to flee to a hotel for a few days.

During the heat wave, we heard from many people, organizations, and faith communities, “How can we help?”  
  
During a disaster, in planning to mitigate poor outcomes, both for your congregants and for vulnerable communities, it helps to plan ahead. So here are some ways you can be prepared for the next, unfortunately predictable, crisis, for your congregants and extended neighbors—housed and unhoused.

1. Have your faith community go through an emergency preparedness training.
2. Work together to decide what you can keep on hand for your congregants living in storage lite living situations.
3. Know who are living alone and might need checking up on during a crisis.
4. Connect with organizations, like Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness, ahead of time, so you know who you want to reach out to when a crisis occurs.
   1. Know who you want to send money, resources, or volunteers to.
   2. Know who you can reach out to for help for your congregants and community.
5. Open your building to be a Cooling, Warming, or filtered air shelter.
   1. Decide ahead of time:
      1. Who will it serve? Congregants, close neighbors, pets? Homeless specific?
      2. When will it be open? The longer the hours the more helpful it is.
      3. Who are two people that can be flexible to open when crisis occurs?
      4. How publicized? The Coalition and others maintained a list…if you want it to be on the list, let people know.
6. Become educated on the homelessness situation in Pierce County. To break past stereotypes, “The Outsiders: Podcast” by KNKX is a good thing to listen to as a community. <https://www.knkx.org/programs/outsiders>

Etc. IF emailed links to resources, how to stay cool, etc. may be helpful…

While our Coalition is specifically focused on improving the plight of the homeless and housing fragile in our community, we believe our more narrow focus definitely overlaps with the concerns of all people, including communities of faith, in Pierce County. We’d love to have you look us up on <https://www.pchomeless.org/> and feel free to contact {specific contact} with additional questions or suggestions of collaboration.

Thank you!

Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness