

# **St. Barnabas Episcopal Church**

**The Church on the Hill**



**Possible New Ministry**

**of**

**St. Barnabas Church**

**Temporary Safe Overnight Parking**

**for fragile members of the community without  
a place to sleep**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

about this possible new ministry

# **Frequently Asked Questions**

## **Possible New Ministry at St. Barnabas Church**

### **Temporary Safe Overnight Parking**

#### **What is the need?**

In these difficult economic times people sometimes find themselves without a home while retaining their vehicle. It is against the law in San Luis Obispo County to sleep in a vehicle except in a registered campground. Those who would sleep in their car or RV risk receiving an expensive ticket from the police. If they choose to park in an area not frequented by the police, the risks are even greater.

#### **Why don't they go to a shelter?**

The closest overnight shelter is in San Luis Obispo. Those who need to be in the Five Cities area for employment or school would find both the travel time and cost of gasoline prohibitive. Also, shelters are not appropriate for people with weakened immune systems, such as those undergoing cancer treatment, do not allow pets, and are often overcrowded.

#### **Where did this idea come from?**

This program was inspired by a successful ongoing program in Santa Barbara County. Currently over 110 people at 21 locations participate in the Safe Parking Project that has been featured on national news

programs. For more information on the program see the website for New Beginnings, the coordinator of the program in Santa Barbara  
<http://www.newbeginningscounselingcenter.org/index.html>

### **Why here, at Saint Barnabas?**

Saint Barnabas has a history of concern for those in need in the Five Cities Area, especially the homeless. St. Barnabas members have been helping to feed the homeless at the Peoples Kitchen since its founding. The Saint Barnabas Thrift Shop grew out of an outreach of supplying coats to the homeless. The people of St. Barnabas have provided homeless men and women over 1700 home made bags containing basic toiletries such as soap, shampoo, a comb, and toothbrush. When we became aware of the need for safe parking it seemed a natural continuation of our ministries, especially since we have a large parking lot with an area where people could park that is more than 90 yards from the nearest house.

### **How many vehicles would there be?**

We would start with no more than three vehicles per night. After an initial period it may be determined to increase the number, but in no case would there ever be more than five vehicles on a given night.

### **When would vehicles be parked at St. Barnabas?**

Registered vehicles will arrive between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. and must leave the premises by 7:00 a.m.

## **How will participants be chosen?**

Jan Stone, a case manager at The Community Health Center (CHC) who works with the homeless of the Five Cities Area, will determine who will have access to this resource.

## **What are the criteria for participation in the program?**

All participants will:

- demonstrate a sincere interest in finding a permanent housing solution
- have a need for safe parking, with priority given to families with children, people with disabilities and the elderly
- have an existing tie to the local community such as local employment, children enrolled in a local school or recent residence in the area
- be in contact with the case manager on a regular basis

## **Will the participants be screened?**

A background check will be performed on all participants. Anyone with history of sexual violations or violent crime will not be allowed at St. Barnabas. Participants will also be screened for indications of drug and alcohol abuse.

## **What if people park there who have not been screened?**

Both St. Barnabas and the Arroyo Grande police will be given a list of vehicles permitted to park. If a vehicle is

found on the property that does not have a permit to park there they will be asked to leave, and if they do not comply the police will be notified.

### **How will they be monitored?**

A St. Barnabas volunteer will drive through the parking lot at least once each evening to be certain that only those who are register are parking in the lot and to see that all of the rules are being followed.

### **What are the rules?**

The rules include:

- No more than 1 vehicle per family at a site
- Parking permit in vehicle window to be clearly visible
- Enter space between 7 and 9 pm and leave by 7 am
- The use of alcohol or drugs will not be tolerated and result in immediate loss of parking privileges
- Cooking outside the vehicle is not allowed
- No littering. All trash must be removed from the site
- Pet waste must be cleaned up and disposed of properly off site
- Loud music or other loud noise is not allowed
- Permitted guests cannot invite other vehicles to the site
- Non-registered guests cannot be on the site
- Violence to others or damage to property will result in immediate ejection from the site and irrevocable dismissal from the program

### **What about a rest room?**

A portable toilet with water for hand washing will be provided by St. Barnabas for participants' use (one key per vehicle will be provided upon registration).

### **Will they be using the church facilities?**

No, the church will be locked and unavailable.

### **Will my children be safe?**

All participants will be screened for any history of sexual violations or violent crime. They will be on site only from 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m., staying in or near their cars and not walking through the neighborhood

### **What if there is a problem?**

The Arroyo Grande police will be fully informed of the program and can be contacted if a problem occurs.

### **Will there be noise like loud music or parties?**

The participants are not allowed to invite non-registered guests to the site. Loud music or other loud noise is not allowed. They are here to rest and sleep.

### **What will the children do?**

If there are children they will be expected to remain close to their vehicle and be monitored by an adult at all times.

### **What about pets?**

Pets will be required to be in the vehicle or on leash and controlled at all times. Pet waste is to be cleaned up and disposed of off site.

### **Will my house be safe?**

The participants will all be screened for violent crimes and are to remain close to their vehicles. The police will be monitoring the area on a regular basis.

### **Will I still be able to walk my dog up there?**

The neighbors are always welcome to walk their pets on the grounds of Saint Barnabas. We would expect the neighbors to be respectful to the privacy of those using the Safe Parking program and to have their pets on leash.

### **What will the participants do during the day?**

All participants will be actively engaged in finding permanent housing, which would include meeting regularly with the case manager and contacting agencies that assist with housing. Some of the participants may be working or going to school during the day. All will be required to leave the neighborhood during daytime hours.

