

# S.F. Churches Opening Doors to Homeless

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To help blunt a cold winter for the homeless, several San Francisco churches are opening their doors to homeless single men by offering food and shelter.

The Interfaith Emergency Winter Shelter Program of the San Francisco Interfaith Council will begin Sunday and last through March 14. Under the program, six church shelters will rotate duties and provide beds for 60 to 100 men a night.

The council, along with Traveler's Aid, will also sponsor 30 beds for families at the Civic Center Residence Family Center at 44 McAllister Street and other hotels from December 7 to March 16.

"Turn-aways indicate there are more women and children on the street than ever and there are similar turn-away rates for men," said Rita Semel, council vice chairwoman. "This is a hard population to do a census on, . . . but there are more people turning up than can be

accommodated."

According to the mayor's office, city shelters have space for 1,800 of the 6,000-plus homeless people.

"Housing is very expensive," said Semel. "A lot of the homeless are working, but they just can't afford a place to live. There was a cut in welfare money to families with children on November 1, and there will be another cut on December 1. So we can anticipate more homeless men and children."

The single-men's shelter will rotate among the First Congregational Church, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, First Unitarian Church, St. Mary's Cathedral, St. Mark's Lutheran Church and Trinity Episcopal Church.

As part of the family shelter program, congregations will provide some meals, diapers, cribs, mattresses, games and books. Volunteers will be recruited to read to the children and help with after-school facilities.