

## Ministry on the Margins keeps its doors open during winter weather

Bismarck, ND- Ministry on the Margins opened its doors on Feb. 27 from 11 a.m. through the next morning to get people off the streets and out of the elements.

Their coffee house, while usually open from 10 p.m. to 8 a.m., was open all day during a record drop in temperatures. From a high of 64 on Feb. 26 to a low of minus 5 on Feb. 27, many people experiencing homelessness would have suffered the snow and chill if not for Ministry on the Margins. While it is not a shelter, they allow anyone who needs a place to rest and warm up to stay as long as they are open.

“We’re ecumenical and a very volunteer-based organization, serving people that just fall through the cracks of all the good services,” Sr. Kathleen Atkinson described. Ministry on the Margins is a low-barrier charity, meaning that, unlike other charities, they serve anyone, including those under the influence.

Along with their all-night coffee house, they also offer free haircuts, hand and foot care, acupuncture, ice cream socials, and prison-to-society support.

“It’s very person-first and then we can start talking of everything else but first, we are going to acknowledge the sorrow and the hurt,” said Ruby Ritchie, a UMary social work student and intern at Ministry on the Margins, “Their approach is, receive everyone as Christ... from that

everything else pours out... I've become more and more confident in our need as a community, as university students to encounter individuals experiencing poverty.”

Ministry on the Margins offers many different volunteering opportunities, including helping with the food pantry, coffee house, or with donations. More information and volunteer sign-up can be found at [www.ministryonthemargins.com](http://www.ministryonthemargins.com).