**Special Leadership Meeting – September 28, 2023**

**Attendees:** Janet Bjorndahl (Chair), Russell Mitchell-Walker, Sam Baidoo, Delia Baidoo, Bonny Manz, Cathie Henderson, Leanne Sudom, Jim Fallows, Ron Brandow

This meeting was called to order at 7:05.

The subject of the meeting was to seek support from the Leadership Team for a letter (attached) written by Janet and Russell on the houselessness crisis in Regina. It is to be directed to the Mayor and City Council. The letter was emailed to the LT members prior to this meeting.

Leanne moved the letter be approved, 2nd by Ron. Carried.

The letter is to be signed by Russell.

Meeting adjourned: 7:07

Dear Mayor and City Council of Regina, Saskatchewan,

We are greatly concerned about the houselessness crisis in Regina. We appreciate the steps taken by the City of Regina, Regina Treaty/Status Indian Services, and The Nest Health Centre in collaboration with the Government of Saskatchewan to provide stable housing or shelter space for some individuals. However, as you are aware, the number of spaces available is not sufficient to meet the need. We are greatly concerned about the people who will not find shelter this winter.

We know that houseless people struggle to find their own solutions, including creating tent encampments to increase their sense of community and security. We encourage the City of Regina to explore reasonable options for tent encampments, like the City of Hamilton has (see [article](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/encampment-protocol-begins-1.6942780#:~:text=How%20enforcement%20will%20work,that's%20allowed%2C%20says%20the%20protocol)).

Eastside United Church is exploring with other churches the possibility of establishing an Out of the Cold program where church buildings are opened one night a week to welcome the houseless to sleep and be fed. This poses significant challenges, given churches’ limited human and financial resources, as well as the potential of dealing with toxic poisoning (so-called overdoses). It is a band-aid solution at best, as it doesn’t address the needs for a stable environment and community, a place to store possessions, privacy, or the many other needs of houseless people. However, it is a response to a sense of urgency about the houselessness crisis.

We ask the City of Regina to take a lead in coordinating efforts to support people who continue to be houseless. We know that long-term solutions, including affordable housing and wraparound supports, cannot fall solely on the City of Regina without Provincial and/or Federal funding. In the same way, band-aid solutions such as an Out of the Cold program cannot fall solely on charitable organizations such as churches and outreach missions.

Our most vulnerable citizens need us. Please work with us to help keep them safe.

Sincerely,