



CHRIST CHURCH, DARTMOUTH

A People United in Justice and Love

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I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' ... 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' Matthew 25

Dear Friends in Christ,

I write to you today to share the news of a continued and new partnership here at Christ Church. As we continue to serve downtown Dartmouth, we at Christ Church have made great efforts to look outward to the community, to support others as we can. One of our neighbours has a need, and as in the past, we have had conversations with the Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia (EFMNS) on how we might be able to support the excellent work that they do.

Recently the parish was approached by Emma Halpern, Executive Director of EFMNS, to see if we might like to support the housing needs of their clients. I have great respect for Emma and the work that her staff and volunteers do at Holly House here in Dartmouth. If you are interested in the great work they do, please visit their website: efymns.ca

The specific mandate of EFMNS is as follows:

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia ("EFMNS") contributes to the prevention and reduction of homelessness by offering housing, programming and advocacy, for vulnerable women and gender diverse people throughout Nova Scotia. In order to continue to provide a safe, fresh start and hopeful future for vulnerable individuals in our community, we are willing to offer wrap around supports to those living in crisis shelters in the Dartmouth community.

One of the challenges EFMNS faces is adequate space as they have limited resources for housing. EFMNS approached our parish executive to see if our vacant lot where the rectory once stood would support two sheltered buildings. You may be aware of the type of structure as they have been discussed widely during the homeless and housing crisis. Through a generous donation from Well Engineered and the Mutual Aid Society, EFMNS secured two units that will be occupied by one person each.

A proposal from Elizabeth Fry was sent to parish council for consideration at our March 24th meeting and was discussed. A unanimous vote determined that the Corporation of Christ Church would enter a formal partnership with EFMNS to offer our resource of land. This association is detailed and specific. If you or someone you know has certain questions, please do not hesitate and contact the parish office.

I want to share with you some of the details of what this partnership means:

- For one year May 1st 2022 to May 1st 2023 EFMNS will operate two modular homes for their clients.
- Clients will be supported daily by on-site supervision by EFMNS staff.
- A liaison group from Christ Church will meet regularly with EFMNS to mutually support the project, maintain a positive relationship with the community, and address any questions or concerns.
- Through the Federal programme under the Reaching Home; Canada Homelessness Strategy (RH) and the generosity of the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia (AHANS), a shower has been installed in the lower hall and a washer and dryer for clients. The use of these amenities will be under the supervision of EFMNS
- There is an opportunity for our organizations to work together on other projects. Christ Church will also be donating programming space on our campus for EFMNS.

As we begin this new partnership, we do so as our country faces record housing costs and economic, social, and racial inequality. By supporting this project with EFMNS the people of Christ Church live our baptismal covenant, which says we *“will strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.”* By helping our neighbours we will also be living out our vision and mission statement: *“we are a people united for Justice and Love and we are called to be a radically inclusive, just, and loving community that seeks to love our neighbour through prayer, worship, action, and advocacy.”*

As you venture into our property and see the modular units, you may have some thoughts and questions. One could say that the units may not constitute what we would consider proper housing. My response would be that this statement is correct. However, the support of these modular units is because, at this time, it is better than the alternative: nothing.

In many ways, the units on our property serve as a visible sign that society has much work to do. Christ Church has a long history of advocating for justice and positive change. Our goal is to make use of our property for the short term doing so, as we continue to advocate and lobby all levels of government and the justice system for improved housing, mental health support, and training for people in need.

At this time, I thank you for the continued support for the work of our church, the members of our parish council, and the Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia.

With Every Blessing in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kyle Wagner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rev. Dr. Kyle Wagner
Rector, Christ Church, Dartmouth