**Homeless Shelter Task Force**

*DRAFT*

*November, 2019*

**Vision:**

Create a new vision for overnight/emergency shelters for those in need in our community.

**Mission:**

To engage and marshal governmental and community resources in a process that leads to an emergency shelter for men and provides resources that move them into stable housing.

**The “Project”**

**Foundations for Success**

*Prevent, Assist, Solve*

**The Need:** An adequate men’s shelter, which is a missing component in a comprehensive effort to address homelessness. With governmental initiatives and community support, important strides have been taken in Madison and Dane County to provide people experiencing homelessness with permanent housing and a daytime center and services. However, another pressing need also exists: a suitable men’s shelter. Without this crucial component, a comprehensive approach to homelessness is incomplete.

Facilities are currently limited to one primary church and two back-up churches (as needed)—St. John’s Lutheran and First United Methodist. Since the mid-1980s, Grace Episcopal Church (Grace) has been the primary location in Madison as a men’s overnight shelter, operated 365 nights a year by the non-profit organization Porchlight. Grace has provided emergency shelter and, with the help of other churches and organizations, meals to thousands of men, providing an opportunity to continue the journey toward self-sufficiency. According to Porchlight staff, the need for such a shelter is expected to persist and perhaps grow in the foreseeable future.

The current facilities are an inadequate stopgap and after 35 years the Grace Church shelter remains what very much it was intended to be in the beginning—a stop-gap solution to an on-going problem. It is a church basement that is not designed to serve a housing function. Despite Porchlight’s dedicated commitment, the current shelter is not conducive to maintenance of a humane environment where dignity and self-worth can be fostered. The effort before us seeks to broaden the scope of community awareness and participation in order to develop a foundation for acceptance of this necessary solution which will require commitment of governmental resources, budgetary and human, and community assistance. “A great city is great only to the extent that all of its residents can flourish.”