

Session VII – Housing First/ Homelessness

Bible Verses of Focus: Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 Kings 19:3-9

Resources Needed:

- Copies of this session's notes printed for each participant.
- A digital projector or large monitor and computer to view the video as a group.
- Bibles, pencils, paper

Gathering Exercise

Mark Pries will lead the group in a devotion.

Introductory exercise:

- Tell of a home blessing you have experienced (observed, shared in, led)
- Or tell of the daily entrance rite at your home.

Bible Study

Ephesians 2:8-10 (NRSV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God--⁹ not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. (Eph 2:8-10 NRS)

Commentary:

Here being “saved” is described as a gift (not earned or merited) because we belong.

-Let's talk about our struggle with receiving an unconditional gift

Now that we're “saved” there's good work to be done (“our way of life”)

-Let's talk about “good works” as a way of life (rather than a means to an end)

1 Kings 19:3-9 (NRSV)

³ (Elijah) was afraid (of Queen Jezebel's threat on his life); he got up and fled for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongs to Judah; he left his servant there. ⁴ He himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and *sat down under a solitary broom tree*. He asked that he might die: "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors." ⁵ *Then he lay down under the broom tree* and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, "Get up and eat." ⁶ He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and lay down again. ⁷ The angel of the LORD came a second time, touched him, and said, "Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you." ⁸ He got up and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights *to Horeb the mount of God*. ⁹ *At that place he came to a cave and spent the night there.*

Commentary

Name a variety of shelters you have chosen: houses, tents, stars, apartments, rooms ...
Preferences?

Living Our Faith

Learning from the ground with Criss Cangenelli, Shelter House executive director

Housing First

Permanent supportive housing is an intervention that combines permanent, affordable housing (tenants have the legal right to remain in the unit as long as they wish, as defined by the terms of a renewable lease agreement and pay no more than 30% of income for housing) with voluntary support services designed to help tenants stay housed and address health issues while building the necessary skills to live as independently as possible. PSH is an evidence-based housing intervention that significantly reduces returns to jail and homelessness, reliance on emergency health services, and improves overall quality of life.

[Cross Park Place](#) is a demonstration project for the state of Iowa formed by the Collaboration Committee of the Local Homeless Coordinating Board and incorporates the FUSE (Frequent User System Engagement) planning approach with the Housing First model, two nationally recognized programs evidenced based practices. Housing opportunities will be made available through a Housing First approach—a permanent housing intervention proven to save both money and lives—and will be targeted for the chronically homeless of our community demonstrating high cross-system service utilization.

Cross Park Place construction began in spring 2018 and was completed recently started accepting occupancy. The building is comprised of 24 one-bedroom apartments with on-site offices and an exam room for case managers and partnering health and behavioral health clinicians.

KWWL | [VIDEO](#) | The first-of-its-kind apartment building in Iowa is ready. It's an apartment building where all of the tenants will have been homeless.

Years worth of work by the Iowa City Shelter House built up to Wednesday afternoon with the grand opening of Cross Park Place.

The apartment complex is a demonstrative project for the state to get people off the streets and hopefully save the community money in the process with its “housing first” focus.

“I’m sure for the people who come here it will be a huge benefit for them and that will rebound to the community as a whole,” Jim Throgmorton, Iowa City Mayor, said. Throgmorton was one of many local leaders that came out for the grand opening.

Inside, there are 24 studio apartments at 370 square feet made possible by the community support.

“For them to do this for us guys, it means a lot to us and we do appreciate it. We appreciate everybody that has donated to it,” Frank Webb said. Webb said he’s been homeless for 30 years. He’ll soon be one of the first tenants to call Cross Park Place his home, a first for him. “I’ve never had a home of my own. I’ve only been in jail or on the streets. I’ve never had a home. It’s going to mean a lot,” he said. Webb said when he was young he spent time in prison. When he got out, he said, he struggled to get a job. The facility also has on-site office space for health and behavior clinics to partner with staff. However, utilizing the services is not required by the residents. That’s because Cross Park Place is a “housing first” initiative.

“We make the housing opportunity available without condition,” Crissy Canganelli, Shelter House Executive Director, said. The future residents of Cross Park Place have been identified by Shelter House as chronically homeless. “So it means not just the length of homelessness episode or episodes but it means that somebody has a diagnosed disability,” Canganelli said. “So, we’re talking about a very vulnerable population.” Canganelli said at least 15 of the units will be prioritized for people that have racked up service debt. “[They’re] incurring really significant costs across our medical, criminal justice and social service systems. Even the medical services in some instances have been over \$1.5 million over three years,” Canganelli said.

Webb, has undergone recent major surgery, said he knows his doctor will be happy. He also added that the Iowa City Police Department will be, too. “They won’t have to deal with me no more,” Webb said.

Canganelli said they hope to start moving in the tenants next week. There’s no limit for how long residents can stay at Cross Park Place. Shelter House hopes they will make it their permanent home.

In 2017, Shelter House received \$2.7 million from the Iowa Finance Authority for the housing project. They were also assisted by the Housing Trust of Johnson County’ for the construction.

Video available at

<https://kwwl.com/news/iowa-city-news/2019/01/16/shelter-house-opens-homeless-apartment-building/>

Conclusion

Name the themes and messages of each of the 7 studies; welcome the breadth of conversation.

1. Affordable Housing as a Basic Human Right
2. The Fair Housing Act and Continuing Segregation in our Communities.
3. Theology of the Hammer- How and Why Habitat for Humanity Works
4. At Zacchaeus’ Home (seeing the poor; seeing solutions, changing minds)
5. Everyone Is Invited- Homes for People with Disabilities
6. Holy Hospitality for strangers and immigrants like Us
7. Housing First: A Response to Homelessness

Review some of the *Living Our Faith* choices from each of the 7 studies.

Give time for participants to name which they are considering or living.

Closing