



Questions & Answers Regarding Tiny Homes, October 6, 2019

What do “Tiny Homes” have to do with Faith Lutheran?

We are in a **birthing moment** as a congregation of a brand-new approach to ministry. Last spring, Faith received a very generous gift of \$100,000 from Chuck Tollefsrud. Part of his designation was to **help homeless veterans**. Shortly after, Faith learned of an opportunity to build Tiny Homes on our church land to offer people with chronic housing insecurity a place to be Settled. Moving forward would be transformational to our congregation, just as the birth of a baby changes a family. The Holy Spirit is breathing into Faith telling us to **be bold**.

We have been called to *Love our Neighbor, No Exceptions* by inviting a group of people off the streets and into community. By doing this, we can create the blueprint for many more churches to create Settlements on their land and eradicate chronic homelessness in our lifetime.

What are we trying to create?

The standard approach to homelessness is called Housing First: “providing four walls and a roof” and offering professional services. This approach falls short because the problem of homelessness is not a lack of housing and professional help alone, but just as critically, a lack of integration into a supportive and nurturing community. A Community First approach focuses not only on providing shelter but on meeting **relational and social needs** in a holistic way.

How does a “Community First” approach work?

A Community First Settlement is an **innovative way** to address long-term homelessness by developing settlements on available religious land in cooperation with a faith community. Each resident has their own tiny home, and as a whole, the community shares facilities and amenities such as kitchens, dining spaces, bathrooms, laundry, gardens, workshops, and gathering areas. The land is managed by a religious or social organization to maintain standards for safety and welfare, and the community members meet and work together to run the settlement. “Missionals” are specially trained neighbors who live in the settlement and work with all the members to ensure that the settlement is healthy and thriving.



Who are missionals?

Missionals are individuals or families who have never experienced homelessness themselves but have a calling and desire to live among the poor and be a good neighbor. Their role is to model a healthy lifestyle and be a part of a routine support system.

For many people on the street, the world feels set up for them to fail and is overwhelming in its sometimes-conflicting agendas and motives. Missionals augment the role of family, which has been lost by most, by supporting a person in navigating life and fulfilling personal goals.

Missionals function as equals by paying the same rent and following the same rules as any resident without compensation.



Why are churches critical?

Outside of religious property, it is virtually impossible to find land or enable development to make Community First Settlements a reality. Using church property reduces or eliminates the cost of land, provides a built-in community that matches with the mission of the church and the scriptural commands to care for the poor, and enables development where it would otherwise not happen because church land is protected under a federal land use law.

Why tiny homes?

- Inexpensive: a tiny home is 1/10th the price of a new affordable studio apartment
- Aesthetically pleasing: Blend into a residential community
- Eco-friendly: Homes use fewer / reused materials to create long-lasting structures that are highly insulated to save on energy costs in a wintry climate!
- Participation: Faith communities and residents come together to create dignified housing.
- Customizable. Can be designed to incorporate creativity, individuality, and functionality.
- Promote community. Settlements will have an emphasis on shared spaces and amenities.



How much will this cost and how will we pay for it?

A mission grant of \$2,500 is covering public relations messaging. Tentatively, the gifts of \$100,000 from Chuck Tollefsrud will go toward the initial construction of the Community First Settlement. Major components of the Settlement include tiny homes for the formerly homeless (Missionals will provide their own) site infrastructure and converting our garage into a community building. A site plan will be developed to give us a clearer financial picture and prepare us for a congregational vote on January 26th during our annual meeting to move forward.

Woodland Hills Church in Maplewood and Woodbury Lutheran (Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod) are also fundraising to support the cost of making this first Settlement, at Faith, a reality. Additionally, each resident of the Settlement will pay rent monthly.

How can I get involved?

- Participate in homeless outreach to the camps and visit the Tiny Home prototype for a warm meal. Groups are limited to four. Age 18 and up. Sign up available for Tuesdays from 2pm - 6:30pm in St Paul: Nov 5, 19, 26, Dec 3, 10, 17, 24.
- Read and discuss Welcome Homeless by Alan Graham on your own or with others from Faith (stay tuned for opportunities!)
- Pray. The Holy Spirit is up to something. Please pray for clear discernment for our church and community.

What is the tentative timeline?

- Oct 2019 – Jan 2020: Feasibility and planning: site plan, legal and regulatory work, congregational communications, preliminary operations plan, preliminary partnerships
- Jan 26, 2020: Congregational Vote to move forward with a Settlement at Faith
- Feb – Nov 2020: training, public relations, neighborhood outreach, construction