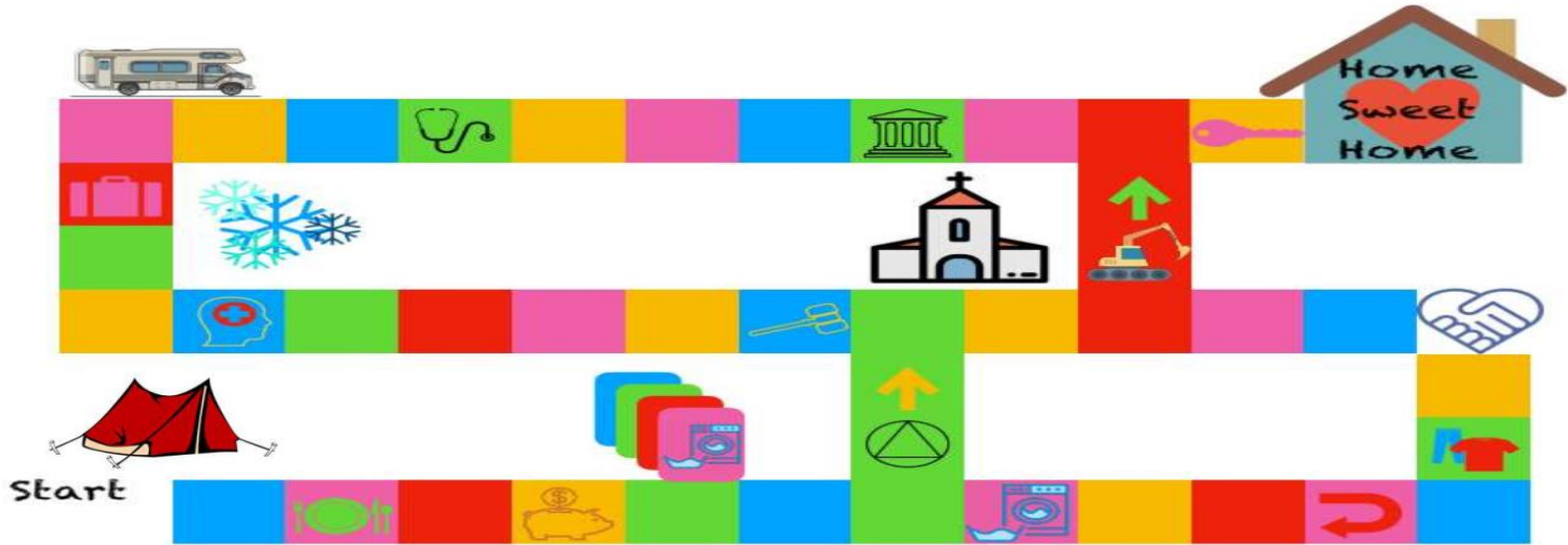


# Un-Housed and Under-Utilized

We can be **GAME CHANGERS** for our unhoused neighbors



**Bishop's Taskforce on Homelessness**

# Un-Housed



# Under-Utilized



# Un-Housed and Under-Utilized

The title comes from attending affordable housing meetings where the church and other Faith Based Organizations (FBO's) are characterized as under-utilized space in a jurisdiction with regard to affordable housing

- To a certain extent jurisdictions are right as FBO's occupy a large footprint that normally does not provide affordable housing
- However it is somewhat of a misnomer as FBO's provide significant services to the community aside from housing

**But the question remains what can we do to minister to those who are un-housed?**

# Homelessness Defined?

- **Homelessness** - living in housing that is below the minimum standard or lacks secure tenure. People can be categorized as homeless if they are:
  - living rough on the streets or in rural areas
  - moving between temporary shelters, including houses of friends, family and emergency accommodation
  - living in accommodations without a bathroom or security of tenure
- **Categories:**
  - **Chronic:** Persons experiencing homelessness for longer than a year, or homelessness four or more times in the last three years. These folks often are unemployed and experience medical, mental health, and substance abuse problems.
  - **Episodic:** Most likely to be young, but tend to move in and out of homelessness. They too are often chronically unemployed and often present with mental health, and substance abuse problems.
  - **Transitional:** Families and individuals who generally enter the shelter system for only one stay and for a short period. Should they have mental health or substance abuse problems they are willing to accept treatment.

**However, a tent or a vehicle is a home to someone un-housed**

# **Bishop's Homeless Task Force**

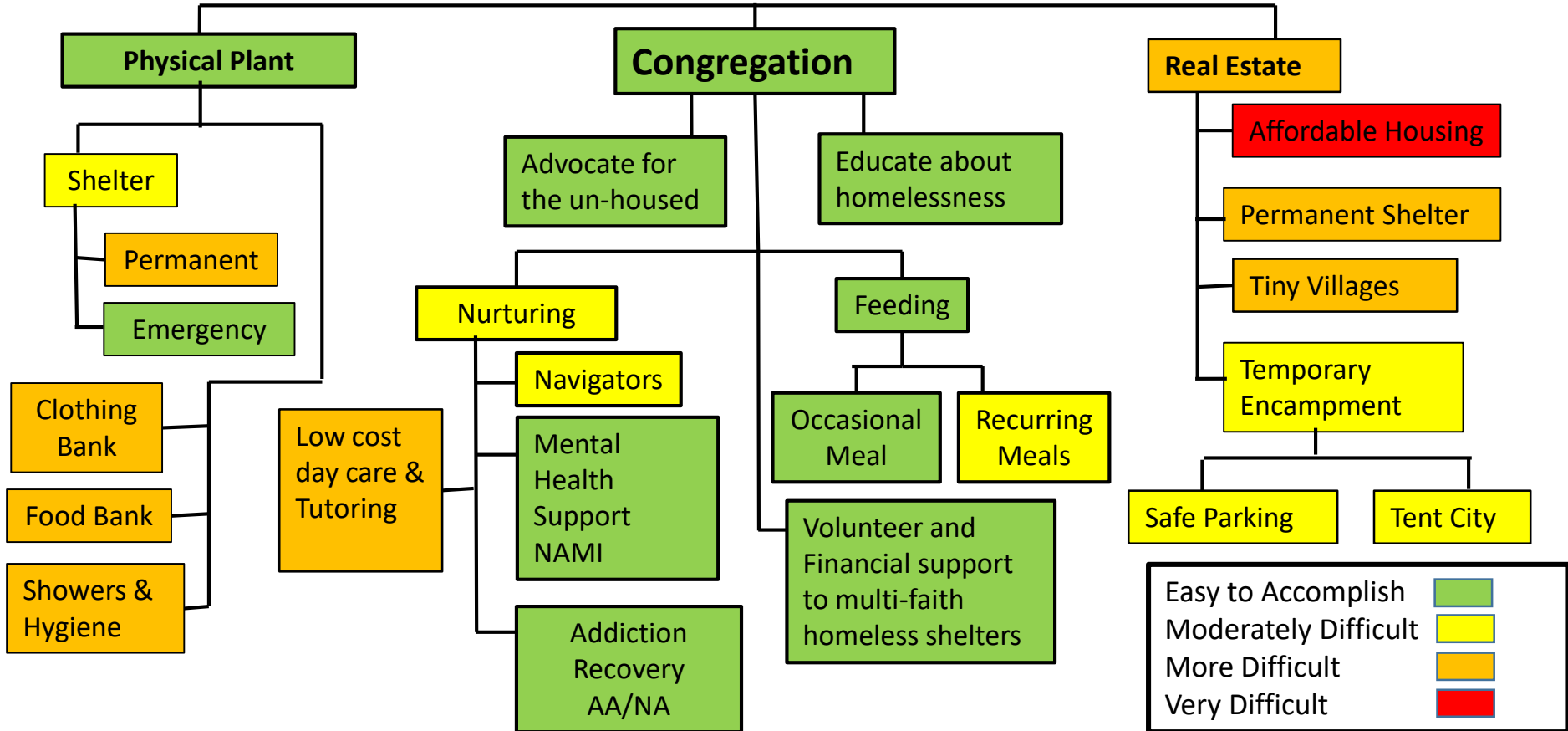
- July 24, 2018: +Greg issues a statement on the homeless crisis
- Summer 2018: +Greg receives multiple responses indicating a willingness to address this problem within the diocese
- November 2018: Taskforce is commissioned by +Greg and meets for the first time at Dhouse
- December 2018 – October 2019: Taskforce meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of every month and will continue to do so until our work is no longer required

**Task Force is open to anyone who has a passion for serving those among us who are un-housed if interested please let us know!**

# Taskforce Current Status

- We have reached out to parishes to learn about their activities in support of those in need and those un-housed (~35 parishes have responded)
- We have focused work on ministries that parishes can adopt/adapt to assist the un-housed
- We have determined that there will be no solution to the homeless crisis until there is an adequate supply of supportive and affordable housing

# Un-Housed and Under-Utilized Homelessness and Parish Church Assets



# Current Parish Ministries to the Un-Housed

- Many participate in coordinated ecumenical efforts for their communities
- Many offer consistent meals prepared in church kitchen, served in parish hall (either daily, weekly or monthly basis)
- Several provide on-site women and family shelters
- A few provide clothing closets
- A few offer showers and laundry facilities
- Some provide safe parking ministries
- Some prepare emergency supply (manna) bags and distribute them locally
- Most provide clergy discretionary funds to assist those in need





We can Feed those in Need



# Feeding the Hungry

- Providing a nutritious meal not only feeds an individual but also builds hope, compassion and love for neighbor.
- Many churches have the needed facilities (kitchen, bathrooms and dining space) needed for a feeding program.
- You'll also need
  - Committed Volunteers
  - Funding for increased maintenance, utilities, etc.
  - Food sources, either purchased or donated.
- We encourage:
  - Community and ecumenical involvement
  - Applying for Diocesan Congregational Development Grants
  - Contacting established feeding ministries in the diocese for support

# Emergency Shelter

- Churches can use their space to provide emergency shelter during periods of weather extremes and disasters and when other shelters are overcrowded
- Congregations **should not** do this alone but should seek an experienced partner
  - Weather extremes – Catholic Community Services
  - Disasters – American Red Cross
  - Overcrowding – Catholic Community Services
- Need adequate volunteers to provide staffing support for shelters
- Check with your insurance carrier to ensure you have adequate coverage and also ensure your partner agency has adequate coverage

# Provide a Temporary Place to Live



# Temporary Encampments – Tent Cities

- Work with a agency knowledgeable of temporary encampments (**do not do this alone**) find 2-3 leaders for the ministry and a slate of volunteers willing to open the church for guests to access the kitchen, bathrooms, showers and laundry facilities if available
- Establish a budget for sanitation facilities (port-a-potties and waste removal), permitting, consumable supplies, towels for showers, increased electrical and water utility expenses
- Set aside space in the parking lot or other open space on the church property for the encampment (be specific as to its boundaries) and notify church insurance of your intent
- Execute a memorandum of agreement with your local jurisdiction for the encampment to include any required permitting and work with your jurisdiction regarding vetting guests and any other required safeguards for the community

# Temporary Encampments – Tent Cities

- Along with local emergency services (i.e. police and fire) hold community meetings explaining what will happen and how it will be managed
- Provide sanitation facilities: 24/7 porta-potty site and a weatherized water spigot and wash sink
- Limit hours church facilities are open based upon slate of volunteers available, (e.g. 2 hours evening and morning) and set any other conditions that need to be specified with the partner agency sponsoring the temporary encampment.
- Prepare for administration of the encampment regarding guests present each night and use of parish facilities and any actions by police or fire relative to medical or other incidents

# Safe Parking A Place to Stay



# Safe Parking

- Many un-housed live in their vehicles and need a safe place to park
- Making use of church property for safe parking is relatively simple
  - Local governments are usually open to churches offering some of their parking lot as a safe parking location as it reduces community concerns regarding vagrancy
  - Provisions for hygiene and sanitation need to be addressed (porta-potties, washing stations, waste receptacles, etc)
  - Deciding what guests you will accommodate and how you will vet them
  - Deciding on whether to open your facility's kitchen and hygiene facilities for your guests and what times they will be available
- You will need an ample number of volunteer ministers to make this happen and a strong leadership team of at least 3 people





# Providing Transitional Supportive Housing Through Tiny Villages



# Tiny House Villages

- Congregations can support the establishment of Tiny House Villages with people and funds
- Development of these villages takes time and requires:
  - Strong and dedicated leadership (2 - 3 people)
  - Support of local jurisdiction
  - Support of the local neighborhood
  - Location of adequate size to justify construction of a village
- Adequate Budget
  - Operations
  - Construction
- Community Advisory Council to support residents and managers
- Security considerations

# Daily Needs

- Churches can provide for many of the un-housed daily needs as follows
  - Laundry facilities either in the church or through a local business
  - Distributing personal supplies (feminine products, handi wipes, socks, etc.) through manna bags
  - Shower facilities either in the church, at a local gym/health club or with specially built trailers
  - Providing a mail address for those without one with a once a week pick-up time at the church
  - Transportation assistance through bus passes
  - Clothing closets
- These ministries will normally operate on a weekly schedule and provide some much needed dignity to those who are un-housed

# Most Importantly – Advocacy

Everyone of us can be an advocate for the Un-Housed

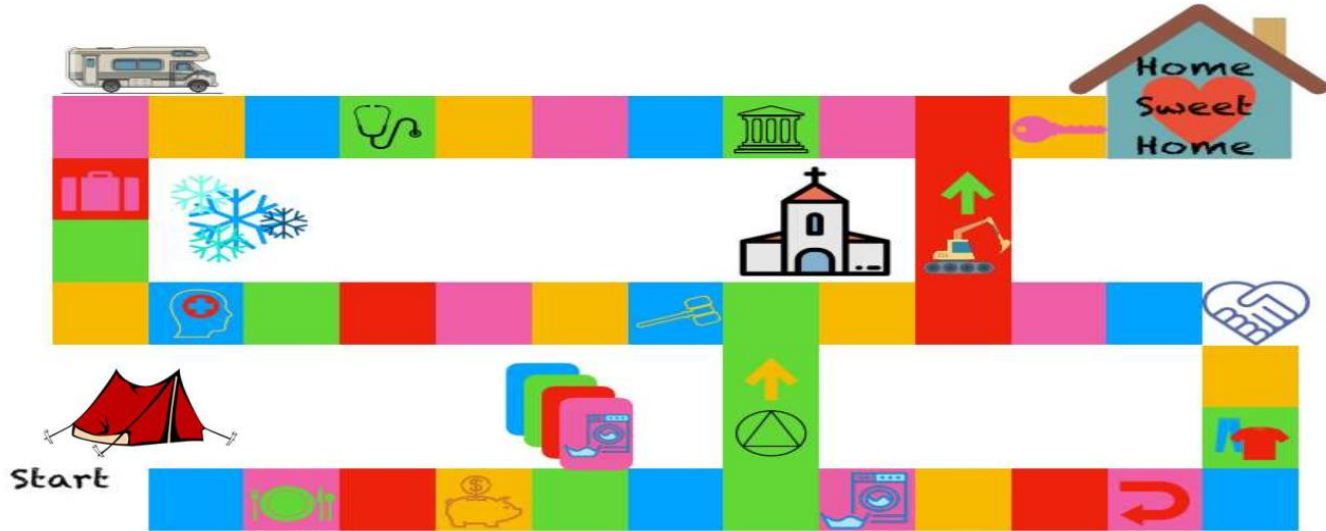
- Access the information regarding homelessness and best practices on the diocesan website
- Talk about what can be done to help those in need with your neighbors, fellow parishioners and most importantly your elected officials
- Attend local government meetings regarding the Un-housed and support all efforts to provide safe places for them to transition into permanent housing
- Support all efforts locally, county-wide and state-wide to provide for critically needed support for the Un-housed.
  - Additional supportive housing to stabilize those who are un-housed with dependency issues
  - Additional affordable housing for those who earn less than \$55K per year
  - Additional reduced or free child-care for the working poor
- Question every candidate for office locally, in your county, state government, and federal government as to how they will address the plight of the Un-housed and increase the stock of affordable housing.

# YOU AND I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Each of us can minister to those who are un-housed by engaging in one or more of the ministries described in this presentation

**But more importantly each of us can be an advocate for more affordable and supportive housing**

We can be **GAME CHANGERS** for our  
unhoused neighbors



Go Here for additional information

<https://tinyurl.com/y6d7nunv>

# Discussion

Best Practices and detailed information  
on homelessness are available on the  
web at:

<https://tinyurl.com/y6d7nunv>

Please go there and join us in working  
on the homeless crisis in our state and  
nation



# Un-Housed and Under-Utilized

**How We Can Make a Difference  
For Those Who Are Homeless**

**Bishop's Homeless Taskforce**

