



Called to Celebrate Grace...

Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, Daring Justice...

September 27, 2023

The Honourable Tim Houston
Premier
P.O. Box 726
Halifax NS B3J 2T3

Dear Premier,

As the individual who helps to set priorities for the provincial government, we are writing to you to include the priority of housing; in particular, short-to-medium term emergency housing and deeply affordable housing. This is an area that the private sector does not make investments and the not-for-profit sector lack resources.

As a downtown Dartmouth church we are all too aware of the situation of people who are unhoused and who are precariously housed. They come to our door for help and we also meet them in the programming we offer with partners. We are deeply concerned, specially as winter approaches and people do not have a safe place to stay for the winter. Shelters that operate only at night do not have the stability and security that people need to leave their current inadequate arrangements.

We are aware that your government has made investments including the recent announcement of 222 public housing units and offered programming in this area but it is not enough to meet the needs as increasing numbers of people become homeless. The July 2023 Sleeping Rough survey has shown that the number sleeping rough in Halifax Regional Municipality has doubled since November 2022 and that more than one in five (11.5%) identify as having lost their housing to a fixed-term lease or renovation.

We appreciate that focus that you have on health care but housing is intrinsically link to this. Inadequate or no housing contributes to ill health that increases health care demand and ill health increases the risk of homelessness.

Yours sincerely,

Wanda Baker Hayward
Chair
Grace United Church Unified Board

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