

Contact: Laura Fisher
Telephone: 559-738-8733
Email: lfisher@kthomelessalliance.org
Website: <https://www.kthomelessalliance.org/>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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St. Paul's Episcopal Church to Open Warming Center for Homeless

St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Visalia, in partnership with the Kings/Tulare Homeless Alliance, the City of Visalia, and Tulare County, has opened a Warming Center for people who are experiencing homelessness. The space will be open from 9:00pm-7:00am seven days a week; blankets, mats, and light refreshments will be provided.

This will be the second year that St. Paul's Episcopal Church has opened its doors to provide a warm and safe place for people to spend the night. Last year the Warming Center reached max capacity on an especially cold night in February when 91 people found refuge there.

St. Paul's Priest-in-Charge, the Rev. Suzy Ward, says, "Churches have always been places of sanctuary and we are also called to serve the neediest and the most marginalized in our communities. We are simply responding to that calling in a very tangible and real way...It has been amazing to see and be a part of the partnership within the county and city to make this short-term Warming Center a reality..."

According to the 2018 Point in Time count (the annual homeless census), there are 462 people in the City of Visalia and 790 people in Tulare County who are experiencing homelessness. Many of those individuals (approximately 66%) are unsheltered, having to sleep outside as the weather becomes colder and wetter.

One Warming Center guest from the 2017/18 season said, "...The warming center has been a safe haven and a place of rest and peace, an island cast in a stormy sea of depression and troubles..."

The Warming Center is asking for community involvement to help stay open through mid-March. They are currently seeking donations as well as volunteers. For a full wish list of accepted donation items as well as information about volunteer shifts, please go to www.kthomelessalliance.org/warming-center/ or contact Laura Fisher, Community Engagement Coordinator at the Kings/Tulare Homeless Alliance, at lfisher@kthomelessalliance.org.

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