RECOMMENDATIONS TO UMC LEADERSHIP RE OUR CHURCH'S PARTICIPATION IN OUT OF THE COLD CENTRE COUNTY
July 8, 2021

Last month, June 2021, University Mennonite Church hosted for two weeks unhoused individuals who live in Centre County, PA. Nightly guest totals at our meetinghouse averaged 7-12 people. Guests were provided with a hot dinner, breakfast, and a dedicated cot to sleep on. UMC members and volunteers from other sites, and employees from OOTC, served as hosts, cooks, and overnight staff, and provided bus tokens. Areas used needed to be scrubbed frequently. Each volunteer has been sent a note of appreciation.

Our pool of volunteers was smaller than previous years. We surmise this is because our congregation is aging and many members/attendees were concerned with being in close quarters with guests who may not have been inoculated for COVID-19. The smaller number of congregational volunteers meant that the majority of the work rested heavily on some volunteers. We believe UMC has reached an important decision point. As UMC representatives on the OOTC Board of Directors, we make the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1. University Mennonite Church no longer serve as a host site for overnight guests from Out of the Cold.

Recommendation 2. Encourage congregants to continue to serve as volunteers at other sites in roles such as host and cook. Regular announcements should be disseminated to the church so it is apprised of volunteer and monetary needs.

Recommendation 3. UMC continue to be generous monetary contributors as individuals and a congregation. Our Lord has called us to serve those in need. OOTC expects to be in their new building in about a year. Until then and beyond, money will be needed.

Neither Mary nor Leah will be standing for election as UMC representatives to OOTC for the 2021-2022 year. As OOTC is evolving into a permanent year-round shelter, job descriptions for Board members are also evolving. This is understandable and appropriate.

Sincerely,
Mary Derstein and Leah Witzig