



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

Rev. Sharon M. Richter, Pastor

May 26, 2020

To the Pasadena Planning Commission:

I am Pastor Sharon Richter, serving Trinity Lutheran Church at Walnut and Catalina in Pasadena. Trinity has operated a food bank for more than 30 years. During the time that we have served the homeless and the very poor, we witnessed the problem of homelessness grow into a major social tragedy . . . and a social burden. Although homelessness is not currently higher than it was a few years ago, it is still very significant. It is poised to grow tremendously now that COVID-19 has shut down so many businesses, organizations, and workplaces. Unemployment is now higher than it was during the Great Depression.

Trinity's primary mission is to serve the homeless and the very poor, as Christ taught us to do. We are willing to devote our property and volunteer resources to help solve this growing crisis, and have approached local social service organizations with options that can help. One of these is to offer "safe parking," which would provide overnight off-street parking, bathroom use, showers, and breakfasts for permitted, vetted, and supervised individuals who have been forced, through no fault of their own, to live in their cars. Such a program would offer them help in finding housing.

Trinity has received encouragement and offers of partnership from the Foothill Unity Center and from a proposed start-up called Food Secure (being organized to provide meals in shelters to the homeless). We would like to have a carefully planned and supervised program put into place as soon as possible. But we have one major problem: Safe parking is not currently allowed in Pasadena.

It seems that people can sleep out in the open, in the rain, in our doorway, and on our lawn (not without harassment maybe), as long as they willingly pick up and leave when asked. But for some reason, they cannot sleep out of the rain in their cars.

We understand why homeowners and businesses do not want them sleeping on residential streets. People fear issues with trash, lack of bathrooms, and perhaps noise and rowdy or illegal behavior (although we have not witnessed any of that among people in their cars). But we do not understand Pasadena's failure to permit a well-managed, strictly controlled, supervised program on private church property, WITH access to bathrooms, showers, and breakfasts. Los Angeles and Santa Barbara both have such well-managed programs, and they remain incident free.

Please help us to help these people, many of whom have jobs or some social security, disability, or veteran income, but no place to live. Permit a Safe Parking program in Pasadena.

997 East Walnut Street Pasadena, California 91106
626-792-1212



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

Rev. Sharon M. Richter, Pastor

Sincerely,

Rev. Sharon M. Ruff Richter

997 East Walnut Street Pasadena, California 91106
626-792-1212