

# Faith in Action: Join the Dream

by the Dream Team



*For where your treasure is there your heart will be also.*

Matthew 6:21

In the January and February *First Word* editions, we provided the history of the "Dream" and the process that has brought us to this point of launching the capital campaign. This \$1,000,000 campaign will provide an unprecedented opportunity for members

of FUMC to impact transitional and permanent affordable housing in Kalamazoo.

Excitement has mounted as the congregation has heard from our proposed partners during an Academy class that is meeting each Sunday through April 7. The Dream team has carefully chosen partners who provide services that help to insure individuals remain in the provided housing. Each organization will also provide opportunities for each of us to engage with the nonprofit and with our neighbors who will benefit from the affordable housing.

You may be asking, "What would \$1,000,000 look like in affordable housing when partnering with these nonprofits and the city?"

† **YWCA** currently has 14 units that provide transitional supportive housing and 4 supportive housing units where residents can stay indefinitely. Sixty percent of reported crimes in Kalamazoo County are related to domestic violence which often leads to homelessness. It is the goal of the Dream to provide additional transitional housing which is a stated need of the YWCA.

† **Open Doors** has a 50-year history with downtown Kalamazoo, and is a highly respected model for low-cost housing. Open Doors is in need of additional affordable housing units. Currently they operate 107 rental units and 2 shelters all of which provide support services to their residents. It is our Dream to provide Open Doors with additional houses or a multi-unit

building (or buildings) based on availability and the collaboration of funding.

† **Kalamazoo Collective** has been in existence since 2007. Currently, 30 individuals across 5 houses live in community sharing in maintenance and home upkeep while learning budgeting and conflict resolution. In 11 years, no one has been evicted and it is the goal of the Dream to provide an additional house to help expand this successful model.

† **Habitat for Humanity** provides permanent housing and is an organization known for its work throughout the world. FUMC's capital campaign would provide the opportunity to partner with our local Habitat on several more houses. We hope that some of you will be ready to pound some nails or paint some walls alongside future home owners.

† **Building Blocks** is a nonprofit engaged in stabilizing and renewing specific neighborhoods since 1995. While improving neighborhoods, Building Blocks coordinates their work with seven other nonprofits, neighborhood associations and the city.

The Dream intentionally provides a variety of housing while meeting a variety of needs. It is difficult to begin to estimate the number of individuals whose lives will be impacted. We do know that churches like our own often band together to provide emergency housing in hotels for individuals or families. But this is a short-term solution for many families.

Recently, Pastor Steve shared with us at a Dream Team meeting that the cost of housing 13 families for one year, each in a single hotel room, would cost nearly \$250,000, after which they would again be homeless.

We look forward to raising together over \$300,000 a year for three years to stabilize the lives of adults and children by providing not only housing but the support services to build a brighter future. Together, we can impact the lives of adults and children for years to come.

