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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

MAYOR BREED ANNOUNCES RETURN OF SAN FRANCISCO'S INTERFAITH WINTER SHELTER PROGRAM

The Interfaith Winter Shelter Program provides additional shelter capacity for people experiencing homelessness during the winter season

San Francisco, CA — Today Mayor London N. Breed, the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH), the San Francisco Interfaith Council (SFIC), and Episcopal Community Services (ECS) announced the return of San Francisco's Interfaith Winter Shelter program, an initiative that with the involvement of different faith communities offers shelter and meals to people experiencing homelessness during the winter.

Now in its 34th year, the SFIC program officially opens Monday, November 21, 2022 and operates through March 26, 2023, and will increase shelter capacity by 30 to 80 beds per night depending on each site's space. This year, the shelter will rotate between five different locations, each represented by a different faith community. Dinner and breakfast will be served every day throughout the program. All sites will welcome all genders and accept self-referrals, ages 18 years and older. Families and unaccompanied minors cannot be accommodated and are encouraged to find other shelter options [here](#).

"I am proud of the progress we have made in exceeding many of our goals in the City's Homelessness Recovery Plan, but we still have a lot of work ahead of us to create thousands of new housing placements for people in need," said Mayor London Breed. "The winter season is difficult for people living on our streets and it is the City's responsibility to ensure safe and warm options for shelter are available. I want to thank our partner faith organizations for providing a welcoming and caring space for people in need, especially during the holiday season."

"I am incredibly proud of the cooperation and teamwork among my staff, and the San Francisco Interfaith Council, Episcopal Community Services and the faith community for once again meeting the challenges of a difficult year, to provide expanded congregate shelter capacity and warm meals this winter," said Shireen McSpadden, Executive Director of the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing. "With our partners, this winter we will continue to offer each guest warmth, safety, food, and connection to the City's Homelessness Response System."

The Interfaith Winter Shelter program is a seasonal, overnight-only (6:00 p.m.-7:00 a.m.) congregate shelter operated by ECS, in partnership with SFIC and HSH. The program rotates between the Canon Kip Senior Center, Saint Mary's Cathedral, St. Mark's Lutheran, and First



Unitarian Universalist Church. Placements will be on a “first come, first served” self-referral basis.

"With the arrival of Winter's inclement weather, our concern is amplified for those San Franciscans who call the streets their home. Caring for them is a moral commitment for our City's 800 communities of faith and religious institutions," stated San Francisco Interfaith Council (SFIC) Executive Director Michael Pappas. "Entering our 34th year, we, will be close to pre-pandemic capacity, with over 50 religiously affiliated entities providing meals at the host sites. Additionally, this season's Interfaith Winter Shelter will feature vaccine pop-ups, offered by the San Francisco Department of Public Health, to both educate and offer vaccine options for our clients."

The Interfaith Winter Shelter is funded by HSH and ECS has operated it since the program's inception over three decades ago.

“The Interfaith Winter Shelter is a critical resource that provides respite from the severe cold during winter months by offering safe shelter, a bed to sleep, and a warm meal,” said ECS Executive Director Beth Stokes. “Enduring the winter season on the streets is not only challenging, but life threatening for many individuals who are already vulnerable and frequently struggling with health issues. ECS is committed to supporting the wellbeing of our unhoused neighbors and we are honored to continue this program alongside our partners at the City and the San Francisco Interfaith Council.”

San Francisco provides shelter and housing to over 15,000 homeless and formerly homeless people across the community every night. In July 2022, 430 new shelter beds were opened in Lower Nob Hill and SOMA. Additionally, 592 shelter beds that were closed during the pandemic due to social distancing have been re-opened.

For more information about the 2022-2023 Interfaith Winter Shelter Program, including dates and hours of operation for each site, please visit: hsh.sfgov.org/services/how-to-get-services/accessing-temporary-shelter/

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