



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local faith communities and organizations to hold “Longest Night: National Homeless Persons’ Memorial Service

Madison, WI, November 27, 2017– Houseless individuals, members of local faith communities and representatives from social service agencies as well as the general public will gather at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, the longest night of the year, to remember and honor people who died without shelter in Dane County and elsewhere this year.

The event, the Longest Night Homeless persons’ Memorial Service marks the 10<sup>th</sup> such event in Madison. Nationally the event has been commemorated annually since 1990 and brings attention to the growing tragedy of homelessness across the country. The service reminds us that every year members of our community, brothers and sisters, sons, fathers, husbands, wives and children die while they are homeless. Too often their deaths are invisible; there is no obituary, no funeral. The Longest Night Service is an opportunity to remember, honor, celebrate and mourn the passing of those in our community who have died.

At a time of year when many of us reflect on our blessings, prepare to celebrate holidays with family and friends, we are also called to remember and offer support to our brothers and sisters who are struggling, who may be vulnerable, who are cold, and hungry and sick. This service is an opportunity to ensure that every life is celebrated and remembered, that no one’s death among us goes unnoticed.

The Service will include music, prayer, reflections and remembrances of our neighbors who have died this year and who were homeless. At 4:30 p.m. there will be a light soup and bread meal provided at First United Methodist Church, and from 5:30 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. there will be an interfaith service of light and remembrance. Participating in Services will representatives from Madison faith communities, Madison-area Urban Ministry, and other advocates working for housing for all.

The event will begin at 3:00 p.m. on the Capitol Square at the intersection of East Main/South Pinckney and King Streets, by the marble bench where Dwayne Warren’s body was found on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Once again we will have a horse drawn hearse lead a procession around the capitol before proceeding to First United Methodist Church for a meal and interfaith service. Individuals who would like to add a name to the list of those to be remembered can do so by calling Linda at Madison-area Urban Ministry at 608-256-0906 or 608-206-6302 or names can be emailed to: [linda@emum.org](mailto:linda@emum.org).

Individuals who would like to drop donations of warm socks, long underwear, hats and gloves for distribution to individuals who are without a home can do so by dropping them off on December 21<sup>st</sup> between 9:00 a.m. and the time of the 5:00 p.m. interfaith service at First United Methodist Church.