

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First Presbyterian Church of Saline to Host Screening of "The Road Home," a Documentary on Homelessness and Mental Health in Washtenaw County

Community screening and panel discussion set for September 13, 2–5 p.m.

SALINE, Mich. — First Presbyterian Church of Saline will host a community screening of *The Road Home*, a documentary exploring mental health, housing insecurity, and homelessness in Washtenaw County, on **Saturday, September 13, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.** The event is free and open to the public and will include facilitated discussion following the film.

The Road Home examines the growing homelessness crisis across the county, highlighting both the efforts of local organizations working to address it and the systemic challenges, including fragmented service networks and funding cuts, that limit their ability to help. The film is intended to unite stakeholders, raise public awareness, and inspire collective action toward compassionate, sustainable solutions.

"Homelessness in our county is not a distant issue, it's our neighbors, and it's growing faster than most of us realize," said Pastor Kimberly. "We wanted to open our doors for this screening because we believe our church has a role to play, not just in caring for people, but in helping our whole community understand what's happening and respond together."

A Growing Local Crisis

The screening comes as Washtenaw County faces a sharp rise in homelessness. According to the Washtenaw County Continuum of Care, at least 842 people in the county were experiencing homelessness as of December 2025, a 42 percent increase from the previous year and a 77 percent increase since 2022. The county's annual Point-in-Time Count, a single-night census of people experiencing homelessness, found that 94 percent of those counted in January 2025 were staying in shelters, while the remainder were unsheltered.

The Washtenaw Housing Alliance reports that families with young children make up roughly 38 percent of those experiencing literal homelessness in the county, and that about one in five people experiencing homelessness is considered chronically homeless, meaning they face long-term homelessness alongside a disability. Local service providers, including youth-focused agencies like Ozone House, have reported growing waitlists for transitional housing as demand continues to outpace available beds and funding.

These trends underscore the themes at the heart of *The Road Home*: that homelessness in Washtenaw County is rising, that mental health and housing instability are deeply intertwined, and that a coordinated, community-wide response is urgently needed.

More Than a Film

The Road Home was created as an educational and engagement tool, not simply a film to be watched and set aside. It is designed to bring together community members, local organizations,

institutions, and decision-makers around a shared understanding of the realities of homelessness, mental health challenges, and housing insecurity.

Screenings of the documentary are designed to include facilitated discussions with local leaders, service providers, and individuals with lived experience, creating space for meaningful conversation and collective problem-solving. The film's goals include:

- Raising public awareness of the realities of homelessness, mental health struggles, and housing insecurity in the community
- Building a shared understanding among stakeholders — from nonprofits to policymakers to residents
- Serving as a catalyst for dialogue through screenings and panel discussions
- Supporting more coordinated and compassionate approaches to addressing these interconnected challenges

"We began to get more deeply involved in homelessness issues last fall when area residents were evicted from their homes. Since then we have been humbled by how much we have learned. It's sad to see how often a client we're working with is on their way to getting on their feet, only to have a series of setbacks that are likely preventable if we would only work together in better ways across the county. I am hopeful that this screening will be a catalyst here in Saline for us to first recognize how many of our neighbors are affected and take serious action, as well as to better connect ourselves with Washtenaw County so we can all be more effective in helping relieve the pressure on families."

Event Details

- **What:** Screening of *The Road Home*, with facilitated community discussion
- **When:** Saturday, September 13, 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- **Where:** First Presbyterian Church of Saline
- **Cost:** Free and open to the public
- **Trailer:** Watch at bit.ly/watchTrailer2

First Presbyterian Church of Saline invites residents, local community leaders, business leaders, service providers, and faith communities to attend, watch, and take part in the conversation about how Washtenaw County can build more compassionate and sustainable solutions to homelessness.

Media Contact:

Samantha Parsons
First Presbyterian Church of Saline
734.274.6766 | communications@salinepres.org
143 East Michigan Avenue, Saline, MI

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