



CHURCHES RESPOND. HOMELESSNESS ENDS. HOPE BEGINS.

## **What does it mean for Bridge of Hope Harrisonburg-Rockingham to be a Christian faith-based organization?**

Bridge of Hope's three main values:

- Following Jesus
- Embracing the Church
- Choosing Hope

John 1:14 (MSG) "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood."

Following Jesus is following the example of one who was engaged with people. Jesus walked with the marginalized in society and confronted oppressive systems. He offered mercy and healing. He fed the multitudes. He regarded the children and called others to do the same. He recognized the agency of women. He embodied transformation. He gave us reason to hope. He offers his Spirit to us.

Being a faith-based organization means that we listen to the guiding wisdom of the Holy Spirit. We pray, we trust, we hope. We also act as the feet and hands of Jesus in walking with families facing homelessness, which involves embracing the church. We invite the church to love, encourage, and support these families as a demonstration of God's love – opening our hearts, hands, and doors in a way that allows for mutual transformation.

We are transparent about our identity as followers of Jesus and how our work is informed by this identity. We operate with open hearts and professionalism in order to be in service to the families in our program.

We listen to the spiritual lives of families as they are willing to share that with us, and we may offer affirmation, ask engaging questions, and encourage them to notice divine presence in their lives during these times of sharing. As a trauma-informed organization practicing awareness of power dynamics, we act through invitation when it comes to the spiritual lives of our families. We share our faith journeys when we are invited to, and we speak in "I" statements that respect the journeys of others, not imposing our beliefs or requiring them to believe. We make no assumptions about what names/images/pronouns the families may or may not use to describe divinity. We remember that, even here, the families are driving the program.

We do not discriminate on the basis of religion. We do not force families to be Christian or attend church, but they are always welcomed. We can let the families know that we are praying for them and let them know we would always be open to praying with them if they wish. Always, we regard the families as images of God.

We promote the work of Bridge of Hope as the work of God's engagement with the community. We invite support through volunteerism and financial donations as participation in the kin-dom of God.

Bridge of Hope Harrisonburg-Rockingham roots itself in the presence of God and the Spirit of Jesus working in and among us as we engage in the community. We are grateful for the invitation.