FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cold weather shelter to open Monday, Tuesday with support of Flagler County, Bunnell, Flagler Beach, Palm Coast

**November 30, 2020** – For the first time this season The Sheltering Tree will open a cold-weather shelter tonight and Tuesday for the homeless with the financial support of Flagler County and the cities of Bunnell, Flagler Beach, and Palm Coast. Church on the Rock in Bunnell is the host facility.

“We are using the main sanctuary to make sure we have enough space (for social distancing), because of Covid-19,” said James Bellino, church pastor. “The Sheltering Tree runs the operation and we provide the facility.”

An interlocal agreement was signed in February 2020 between Flagler County and the three municipalities to provide $1,000 per night – capped at 24 nights – to cover costs associated with providing the service such as space usage, utilities, security, and meals among other expenses. Limited transportation will also be provided.

“Homelessness is a problem that traverses jurisdictional boundaries and therefore, the most effective solutions will involve intergovernmental coordination,” the agreement states.

The criteria for opening the cold-weather shelter is based on an overnight temperature that dips below 40 degrees.

The Sheltering Tree, under the umbrella of the Flagler County Family Assistance Center, is a non-denominational civic organization that was created in 2011 to provide cold-weather sheltering during cold nights in Flagler County.

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