Yuba Sutter Habitat for Humanity has purchased the former First Baptist Church at 916 Plumas Street in Yuba City and has received a state grant for $350,000 to convert it to the coordinated entry location for homeless services and a 48-bed shelter.

(Photo by: Angela Guglielmino/Appeal-Democrat)

A former Yuba City church will be converted into a homeless services building and shelter, according to Habitat for Humanity Yuba-Sutter Board Chair Joseph Hale. The nonprofit organization closed escrow in late November on the former First Baptist Church building at 916 Plumas Street, in the same block as the former Fremont Hospital.

Hale said the former church site will become home to the coordinated entry program on the Sutter County side of the Feather River currently operated out of the Hands of Hope building on Spiva Avenue in Yuba City. In addition, there will be emergency shelter with 48 beds, and additional housing for families transitioning from the street to permanent homes. Ten beds will be reserved for patients released from hospitals with no home to go to.

The project will be called The Life Advancement Center and services could begin there in a matter of a few weeks, Hale said. The shelter would open later.

The organization bought three lots, one which includes a house, for a total of about 1.5 acres, Hale said. The house is already occupied by a full-time director and will serve other 24-hour-a-day administrative functions, Hale said. Johnny Burke, director of the Sutter-Yuba Homeless Consortium, said Habitat for Humanity received a state grant for $350,000 to remodel the building.

“The building is in incredible shape,” Hale said. “We’ve already done work on the HVAC system, and we’ll need to make modifications for showers, bathrooms, and safety features like a fire sprinkler system.”

Homeless services in Yuba and Sutter counties are coordinated through entry at two locations currently, on Spiva Avenue in Yuba City and at the Life Building Center at Second and F streets in Marysville. The operations are a partnership between Habitat for Humanity and Hands of Hope.

A recent change in state law makes it easier for church property to be converted to housing. Hale said no change of zoning is required.

He said the remodel project to accommodate the shelter should be completed by early to late spring.

This would be the first new homeless shelter opened in Yuba City since Better Way, a 40-bed tuff shed community, was completed in 2019.