

November, 2018

Every day, in communities across Canada, 35,000 people experience homelessness. Millions of others struggle to meet rising housing costs, living on the edge of falling into homelessness themselves. This reality impacts every community in Canada, affecting our neighbours and members of our congregations. As we join with others across the country to observe National Housing Day on November 22, we pause to reflect on the very real, very human impact of these statistics and to offer our prayers that we may develop the courage to respond to this ongoing crisis.

In August of this year, more than 800 youth and leaders gathered in Thunder Bay, Ontario for the biennial Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth (CLAY) gathering. At this gathering, participants joined in the launch of “Welcome...Home”, the new National Youth Project encouraging young people in the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) to engage on issues of homelessness and affordable housing. A resource designed to help small groups reflect on the issues of homelessness and affordable housing is now available: www.claygathering.ca/national-youth-project/

“Welcome...Home” is an opportunity for all of us in our churches, regardless of age, to continue to live into the commitments made in our 2013 Joint Assembly Declaration. The ongoing response of Anglicans and Lutherans to the housing crisis includes learning more about the realities of homelessness in our communities and across the country; praying for safe, affordable housing for all; and acting in partnership with others to ensure better access to appropriate housing for those most directly impacted. We look forward to the leadership and challenge of our youth over the next two years of this project.

We encourage you to lift up National Housing Day in your communities and to continue to advocate for improved access to housing for those most in need. Solutions to this crisis will require creativity, commitment, and political will, and so we ask you to join us in prayer for the action necessary to address these challenges, and to remember those of our neighbours who are without a home this day. Toward this end, we commend to you the following prayer, that was written by Ray Simpson and offered at the Joint Assembly of the ELCIC and ACC in Ottawa, July 2013.

Heavenly One,
Who although homeless at your birth,
Made your home with us on earth,
And thus marked each with divine dignity:
Imbue us with your mercy
Inspire us to offer each of your children a safe home,
That we may live on earth as they do in heaven.
Amen.



The Most Rev. Fred Hiltz
Primate, Anglican Church of Canada



The Rev. Susan C. Johnson
National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran
Church in Canada



The Rt. Rev. Mark MacDonald
National Anglican Indigenous Bishop,
Anglican Church of Canada