

November 16, 2016

## NATIONAL HOUSING DAY 2016: A call to prayer

Dear friends in Christ,

In the spirit of the 2013 Joint Assembly Declaration, we call on members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and the Anglican Church of Canada (ACoC) to pray for safe, affordable and adequate housing for all on November 22, National Housing Day.

Adequate housing is essential to one's sense of dignity, safety, inclusion and ability to contribute to the fabric of our neighbourhoods and communities.<sup>1</sup> Housing is a human right.

We live in a country of abundance, yet not all benefit. Among the most vulnerable are the many who are homeless or living in precarious or unaffordable housing, children living in poverty with little hope for a brighter future, and young people who are underemployed and increasingly alienated from the political process.

More than 235,000 Canadians experience homelessness each year, with as many as 35,000 people homeless on any given night. Nearly one in five Canadians spends more than 50% of their income on housing costs, resulting in extreme housing affordability problems.<sup>2</sup>

Housing in many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities is currently in extremely poor condition, with many families living with mould, insufficient heating, and overcrowding. Indigenous peoples are more likely than other groups to live in inadequate housing conditions and will often experience systemic discrimination in the housing market.<sup>3</sup>

The 2013 Joint Declaration calls on our churches to address the long-term challenges of homelessness and affordable housing. Along with prayer, both churches committed to learning about the underlying issues, supporting existing programs, exploring innovative approaches, and advocating for renewed federal funding and a collaborative national strategy on housing.

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<sup>1</sup> Ontario Human Rights Commission (<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/>)

<sup>2</sup> *The State of Homelessness in Canada 2014*, Homelessness Hub Research Paper  
[www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/SOHC2014.pdf](http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/SOHC2014.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS21\\_rev\\_1\\_Housing\\_en.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS21_rev_1_Housing_en.pdf)

We invite you to lift up National Housing Day on November 22 and commend to you the following prayer:

God of compassion and hope,

Open our hearts to the needs of our neighbours who are homeless, under housed, seeking refuge or denied the right to water.

Open our minds to the issues that contribute to poverty, homelessness, and substandard housing.

Open our eyes to opportunities for ministry, to partnerships, and to innovative approaches for addressing these challenges.

Open our hands to act with compassion and for justice.

Bless us with time, patience, persistence, and commitment over the long term,  
So that all may have safe, affordable and adequate housing.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

Yours in Christ,



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



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



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