

Housing as a Human Right

Currently, around 235,000 people experience homelessness in Canada. Experiencing homelessness can be temporary or long term. There are many causes, including poverty, domestic violence, and discrimination. Injustices such as xenophobia or racism or transphobia often contribute to housing insecurity, as well as issues like insecure employment, under employment, mental illness, or accessibility barriers.

Need often surpasses available shelter beds and subsidized housing is wait-listed, sometimes for years. Inadequate housing leaves people more vulnerable to violence and other forms of harm. No one should have to face this. Adequate shelter is a human right—every person deserves the dignity of safe, good standard, affordable housing.

What can you do?

Many congregations participate in the Coldest Night of the Year walk (Feb. 26, 2022). This community-based initiative helps to raise money to assist those who are facing homelessness and hunger. You can do some research to learn more.

We can change the conversation about housing by addressing prejudice and systemic injustices. Talking about housing as a human right helps push back against some of the systemic injustices mentioned above. For example, job applicants need an address to find and keep a job.

We can learn about the factors that build up homelessness prevention, such as access to health care and education, wage equity, social inclusion and community participation, and policies that contribute to affordable housing. These factors work together to reduce the likelihood that someone will experience housing insecurity or homelessness in the first place.

Preventing homelessness and housing insecurity requires that many sectors and levels of government work together but ensuring safe and adequate housing is a key pillar to community and human flourishing.

Questions for Reflection on the sermon theme

Let's use the image / metaphor of dancing to reflect on our church priorities for 2022, through these questions, questions in the text of the sermon, and your own questions. Often, it's the right question that helps give us the best focus.

Remember what you wrote last fall when Josh asked us to list
what in church life gives us joy?
What has your dance with God been like in 2021?
What has NSMC dance with each other & with God been like?
What will your dance be in 2022?
What will North Star's dance be in 2022?

Will we each dance on our own?
Can we dance in step with each other?
Will we be slow dancing or fast dancing or something else?
Will you have to be dragged around the dance floor?
Or will you lead? Will you dance in partnership?
Will you sit out the dance?

What will our dance be like with the changes we know will occur, much less the unknown changes in our church life?
In the future, when we look back on this next year, and ask,
how was the dance, what will the answer be?
How would God describe your and our dance?
How would you frame some questions we should ask about our personal spiritual lives, our congregational priorities, the Reimagination process and dancing as we enter a new year?
Most of all, can we imagine what our dance with Jesus will be like in 2022 and beyond?