



United We Dream

THE EOORC CAMPAIGN FOR DREAM AT LEBRETON FLATS



All My Relations The EOORC Campaign for MHI – United We Dream

We owe the Aboriginal peoples a debt that is four centuries old. It is their turn to become full partners in developing an even greater Canada. And the reconciliation required may be less a matter of legal texts than of attitudes of the heart. – Romeo LeBlanc

Gathered by God

WELCOME

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREPARING OUR HEARTS FOR WORSHIP

Improvisation #3 on a Passamaquoddy Dance Song (Algonquin)

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE Come Light of Lights

Ruth Cunningham

**Come light of lights into my heart.
Come wisdom of Spirit into my heart.**

CALL TO WORSHIP

In the presence of Creator, we gather this day in a spirit of gratitude.
Gratitude for all the gifts of Creation – the air, the water, the land, the seasons.
Gratitude for all the creatures that walk, swim, fly, and crawl on this earth.
We gather, seeking wisdom to help us live a generous and compassionate life.
We gather, seeking wisdom to help us live together with respect and humility.
We gather, seeking hearts and minds open to new possibilities and new beginnings.
We gather as children of Creator and bless our place in Creation.
When we know our place, we respect the place of others – all my relations.



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OPENING PRAYER

Creator,
We give thanks for the knowledge you give us
through all the Indigenous cultures of the world.
Help us to honour the gifts that each offers.
We stand in the presence of all our relations.

We give thanks for the East,
for the sun that rises to begin each new day.
We give thanks for new life, for youth.
We give thanks for new learning and new experiences.
We are mindful of young parents without safe places to raise children.
We are mindful of youth without safe places to live.
We stand in the presence of all our relations.

We give thanks for the South,
for the growth of the summertime in our lives,
for the teachings to be kind to ourselves and others.
Help us, who are elders, love and respect children and youth.
Help us to care for the elderly and those who cannot care for themselves.
We are mindful of seniors and elders without safe places to live.
We stand in the presence of all our relations.

We give thanks for the West,
for the understanding of how to care for the earth.
Creator, help us to use this understanding
to bring joy and new life to the world.
We are mindful of adults struggling to keep a safe roof over their heads.
We stand in the presence of all our relations.



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We give thanks for the north.
Help us to receive gifts of wisdom and new perspectives from all peoples.
Help us to grow our roots of compassion deeper as we journey.
May we who have the luxury of homes help those who do not.
Together, we stand in the presence of all our relations.

HYMN MV 135 Called by Earth and Sky Pat Mayberry

Refrain:

Called by earth and sky,
promise of hope held high.
This is our sacred living trust,
treasure of life sanctified,
called by earth and sky.

*After last verse, repeat two times
called by earth and sky.*

1. Precious these waters, endless seas,
deep ocean's dream,
waters of healing, rivers of rain,
the wash of love again.
2. Precious this gift, the air we breathe;
wind born and free.
Breath of the Spirit, blow through this place,
our gathering and our grace.
3. Precious these mountains, ancient sands;
vast fragile land.
Seeds of our wakening, rooted and strong,
Creation's faithful song.



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- Precious the fire that lights our way,
bright dawning day.
Fire of passion, sorrows undone,
our faith and justice one.

Listening for Wisdom

THEME CONVERSATION FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS – WHO ARE YOUR PEOPLE?

We're going to turn the theme time into a family event. Turn to someone outside of your family and greet them in an Indigenous manner by asking them these questions:
What is your name? Who are your people? Where did your family come from?
Find someone else and do it again!

PRAYER FOR INSIGHT **Listen to the Word that God has Spoken** Anonymous, Canadian

**Listen to the word that God has spoken;
listen to the One who is close at hand;
listen to the voice that began creation;
listen even if you don't understand.**

READING Luke 9:51-62

A reading from Luke 9:51-62, the First Nations Version:

His work on earth was coming to an end, and Creator Sets Free (Jesus) would soon be returning to the spirit-world above. So he drew strength from deep within and made up his mind to go to the Sacred Village of Peace (Jerusalem) and finish what his Father sent him to do.

He sent some other messengers ahead to High Place (Samaria) to find lodging, but the people of High Place would not welcome him, for they knew he was on his way to the Village of Peace, and they wanted nothing to do with the people there.



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When He Takes Over (James) and He Shows Goodwill (John) found out he was not welcome there, they said, “Wisdomkeeper, do you want us to call down fire from the spirit-world above to burn them up, like the prophet Great Spirit is Creator (Elijah) did?”

Creator Sets Free spoke sharply to them, “You do not know what spirit you are listening to, for the True Human Being came to help people, not hurt them.”

After that, they walked silently with him toward another village.

As they traveled on, a man walked up to Creator Sets Free. “Honored one,” he said, “I will follow you wherever you go.”

He answered the man, “The foxes live in their holes, the winged ones who fly above us live in their nests, but the True Human Being has no place to lay his head.”

Creator Sets Free turned to another man and said, “Come, walk the road with me.”

“Honored One,” he said, “let me first go home to my father until it is time to bury him.”

“Let the ones who are dead bury their own dead,” he said to the man. “You are alive, go and tell others about Creator’s good road.”

Another said to him, “Honored One, I will walk the road with you, but first let me go home and prepare my family.”

Creator Sets Free told him, “No one who begins a journey and then turns back is ready to walk Creator’s good road.”

This is wisdom from our ancestors in faith.

GIFT OF MUSIC Hodie!
or alternative as your music ministry chooses

Natalie Sleeth

REFLECTION

Rev. Dr. Teresa Sku’ Nandum Burnett-Cole

I grew up in a village in Southwestern Ontario. The closest thing we had to a homeless person was Old Johnny. He lived in a shack between Mrs. Glover’s house. It was pretty



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ramshackle and run down, and we couldn't play over there. As I prepared this service, I've been thinking about John extensively over the past few weeks. I don't know whether John was Indigenous. It doesn't matter. He had a job – he was the local dump man, and he often hauled bits and pieces of refuse home with him. I remember John because he was an outsider, and I had a sense as a child that there was something "off" about Old Johnny – something a little dangerous.

I didn't think of our village as racist – though there was a particular pecking order in the largely immigrant community. It went Dutch, Portuguese, British Isles, everybody else, and then the Indians. I had grown up and moved to London when my parents decided to sell the house and move. I don't know all the ins and outs of the sale, but to make a long story short, my father decided to sell the house to an Indian couple from one of the local reserves. It was the late eighties, but no one would give this couple a mortgage. It isn't easy to finance off-reserve housing because, although you likely owned your home on the reserve, the land is owned in common. You can't sell it to just anyone – only to another band member. This young couple was stunned when my father offered to hold the mortgage himself. It was his way of balancing the odds just a little bit. I doubt he ever explained his Indigenous heritage. He just quietly put his thumb on the scales of justice.

I remember moving to Toronto and being shocked by the high number of homeless people. I lived near the Friendship Centre at Spadina and Bloor, and Indigenous people always hung out there. I used to see our regulars on the steps to the church. I often felt paralyzed by guilt when I walked by them. However, I was a university student and not far from homelessness myself.

These people formed my concern for homelessness: Old Johnny, that young couple starting, and the people on the steps of Trinity-St. Paul's United Church.

"Homelessness" is a tricky word for many of us. Some might feel guilty because we know that in our community, we encounter people who are homeless. Others might feel angry because we do not solve homelessness better as a society. Still others might, at times, feel indifferent toward homeless people, thinking the poor should get their act together. Others might feel unaffected by the issue, believing that our taxes are related to such problems and that the government should take care of these people.



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But here's the thing – anyone can become homeless. In 2021, 11.2% of Canadians, that's 1,690,000 people, admitted that they had been homeless at some point in their lives. The Homelessness Hub estimates that at any given time, Canada has between 150,000 to 300,000 homeless people. Why the high fluctuation? As many as 50,000 people are couch-surfing or staying with friends. Often, women find other ways to get out of the cold. What we do know is the number of unhoused people across the country is high.

Now, what about Ottawa? The most recent statistics for Ottawa were gathered in October of 2021. Every night here in Ottawa, over 2,000 people stay in emergency shelters. Our family shelters are 35% over capacity. We have a waiting list to access emergency shelter, let alone housing. Besides the 55% who were lucky to get a bed in an emergency shelter, 13% were in transitional housing, 11% stayed at someone else's home, 9% were on the streets, 6% were in treatment centres, jail or hospital with no fixed address, 3% were sure where they would stay, and 2% were living in encampments. That's Ottawa, folks. We're about average for a Canadian city.

Drilling down deeper still, what about Indigenous people? Friends, 32% of people experiencing homelessness identified as Indigenous. To put that number in perspective, Indigenous people make up 4% of the population in Ottawa. Breaking it down further: 40% were First Nations, 34% were Inuit, 15% were Metis, and the remaining 11% identified as having Indigenous Ancestry. One more statistic – of the 428 Indigenous respondents, a full 42% had been in foster care.

Although the root cause is poverty, people become displaced or unhoused or homeless in all kinds of circumstances they did not choose. Maybe they experienced violence or were abused at home, so they distrusted the world from an early age. Or perhaps they were born gay or queer to families who view them as outcasts, so they were thrown out. Others were forced from their homes by natural disasters like fires, and they were uprooted from their homes and never able to rebuild. Or maybe they are jobless—not because they are lazy—but because they have no legal documents for employers to hire them. Or perhaps they are under-employed or working beneath the table. Many are dealing with an array of health conditions; chief among these are chronic diseases, physical disability, substance abuse, mental health issues, and learning or cognitive limitations.



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According to the Raising the Roof website, approximately 235,000 Canadians experience homelessness each year. The number of homeless people and the length of time they spend homeless continues to rise.

In today's Gospel reading, we see Jesus, James and John preparing to journey towards Jerusalem. Jesus was searching for hospitality in a Samaritan village and didn't find it. No one offered Jesus a place to stay. James and John were so angry that they wanted to punish the Samaritans – to command fire to rain down on these people and consume them. But Jesus was not flattered at all – in fact, he was very upset with his disciples' reaction. He had told them before, and he would say to them yet again that if people didn't listen to them, if they would not welcome them, just shake the dust of that town from their feet and move on. And so they did.

Jesus talked about the radical demands of discipleship. In this story, Luke introduces us to three would-be followers who seem genuinely interested in following Jesus. A spirit of urgency invades this story. Follow me, says Jesus – NOW! No ifs or buts. For the Lukan Jesus, it is definitely – now or never! Let's look at these three followers starting from the last. The third would-be follower has an important business to wrap up before he can follow Jesus. He wanted to go home and say goodbye to his loved ones. What's wrong with that, you may ask? In light of the immediate mission ahead – the sending out disciples to the different villages – for the followers to go home will mean they will miss out, though their request seems reasonable enough. "If you're looking back," Jesus says, "you can't plow a straight row." That's another brutal response. I guess when your face is set to Jerusalem like Jesus, it's hard to be impressed even with excellent excuses.

Jesus spots a second person. "Hey, there, let's go. Follow me." The person doesn't say no. He just had something else to do first, which was important. "Let me go and bury my father first." In that ancient society, as it is in ours today, burying one's parents was a solemn obligation. It was a part of obeying the commandment to honour your father and mother. Who can blame this person? I'd do the same thing, wouldn't you? The second follower continued to reason: "I have responsibilities to bury my father. I'm not free to follow you right now. But I'll follow you immediately when my father is all safe and secured six feet under the ground." Jesus' answer seems harsh, one that is hard to



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understand. It seems to run counter to family responsibilities: "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go anyway and proclaim the Good News." What on earth does Jesus mean by these words?

I like how American writer Nancy Rockwell interprets this: "Leave him, let those with no vision of the future bury him who has no future." This phrase implies that we should spend our time and energy on living people, not dead people.

And the first follower steps up: "Jesus, I will follow you wherever you go." "Sure," Jesus answers. "Foxes have holes, and birds have nests, but I have no home. I have nowhere to lay my head. I am a homeless man. Any bed I have is because someone lets me use theirs. Are you still interested? Life will not be comfortable when you follow me. There will be challenges along the way and difficult choices; you will stumble and fall and be homeless, hungry and lonely. It's your call.

I have a sculpture on my desk. It is a miniature of a bronze sculpture called "Homeless Jesus," created by Toronto sculptor Timothy Schmalz in 2013. It depicts Jesus as a homeless person, sleeping on a park bench. His face and hands are hidden under the blanket, but wounds on his feet reveal his identity as the Crucified Christ. Schmalz has described it as a "visual translation of the scripture: "whatsoever you do to the least of these, you did it to me." Reactions to the sculpture were intense. Some were provoked, others uncomfortable, and others thought it offensive and blasphemous.

A couple of Cathedrals rejected the sculpture before Jesus was installed at Regis College in Toronto, kitty-corner to the Ontario legislature. I wonder how many politicians walk by it on their way to work? Fourteen years later, "Homeless Jesus" has found a home in more than one hundred places worldwide. In each place, he challenges the complacent, the wealthy, the powerful, and us in both heart and mind. I've placed my miniature on the coffee table so you can look at it yourself.

Jesus held nothing back when he said he was a homeless man. He placed himself with the displaced and uprooted, those with nowhere to lay their tired bodies and wearied souls for comfort.

What seems to be true for the Indigenous homeless I knew: the streets were often better than the homes they left. But here's the thing I have come to believe as truth: people



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experiencing homelessness have been disconnected from their social networks – the loving relationships that we all need to survive and thrive. So many people at risk need the support of caring people. It is easy to see the problem if you drive through the low-income areas of our city. But what about here in the Glebe? Have you noticed the young couple sitting on Bank Street or Old Johnny, who sleeps in a blue tent in our doorway?

Friends, we cannot solve homelessness by ourselves. We need partners – faith communities, civic groups, corporations like the ones who partner with MHI, governments, and individuals. I know many people in this congregation support women's shelters, the Mission, Operation Come Home, and Habitat for Humanity, to name a few local charities.

Some Glebe-St. James people walk in the Tulipathon annually to help raise funds for rent subsidies for clients of MHI. Others work towards eradicating homelessness by working towards a guaranteed livable income. Still, others volunteer at soup kitchens, food banks, and missions. MHI has an ambitious plan to raise \$1.6 million for the Indigenous Housing Project. That number sounds big until you factor in all the churches that could be involved over the 18-month campaign. What are we willing to do here at GSJ? We've made an initial contribution with this service and its recording. But are we willing to set a fundraising goal to help them out? If all the churches across the region were to contribute some, I believe that 18 months is a reasonable amount of time to gather those funds.

In reality, stories of homelessness don't have happy endings unless we step up to do something about them. But Jesus said it so himself – he was a homeless man. It's a story that bothers us, but it's here in the gospel of Luke and won't go away. How do we respond? There are so many homeless people in our communities that need our immediate attention. They might not be sitting or sleeping on the front steps of our church building, but they roam our communities and the streets of affluent neighbourhoods. They are also outside the doors of Canada in countries where life and humanity are taken for granted. As followers of Jesus, God calls us to respond with love and justice. In doing so, we may find someone who doesn't look, smell, or speak like us. And that someone might be the Homeless Jesus in disguise.



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Responding to the Word

HYMN Unity Carol

Tune: Huron Carol

1. Before we came into the world
before our lungs drew air,
around us wrapped the Holy One,
God's very breathe was shared.
Before we ever knew "apart"
the beat we heard of one Great Heart.
Out of Love into the world, each of us came.
May we ever be as one.
2. Through all the world we have dispersed,
to every island come.
We've built our lives and families
on land we now call home.
Yet we forget there are no walls
upon a planet loved by all.
Out of Love into the world, each of us came.
May we ever love as one.
3. Tomorrow does not build itself;
it, by our hands, is made.
Through care and justice might we all
its great foundations lay.
We'll set aside the tools of yore
and build with love forevermore.
Out of Love into the world, each of us came.
May we ever dream as one.



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INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

We are called to share the good news of God's love.
We are called to share our resources of time,
energy, prayer, and money in ways that enable us and others
to continue the ministry that Jesus began. Let us present our offering.

The offering is collected.

OFFERING HYMN VU 239 O Great Spirit

OFFERING PRAYER

We give these gifts freely, we receive these gifts gratefully.
We dedicate these gifts to the work of our congregation:
Serving human wholeness, caring for our planet,
Upholding religious freedom, welcoming the stranger,
Loving one another.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

O Great Spirit, how we long to hear your name.
How we long to see your face.

Gentle God, grandfather and grandmother of us all,
help us to see that what we see,
that what we touch is sacred, is holy...
that the ground upon which we walk is holy.
O Great Spirit, how we long to hear your name
How we long to see your face.

Holy One, help us to imitate the sun in warming our sisters and brothers,
the birds and the trees whose secret is peace,
help us to be like the spring wind



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which does not destroy what it touches.
O Great Spirit, how we long to hear your name
How we long to see your face.

Great Spirit, in the circle of friendship, in the sharing of support,
the strength of companionship, your presence is made real.
Help us be present to those of us who need to feel your love right now.
In particular, we hold up to you our Indigenous brothers and sisters
those on the streets, those living in shelters, those in transitional housing
those precariously housed, and those just making ends meet.
O Great Spirit, how we long to hear your name,
How we long to see your face.

God, may we have the eyes to see the reality of your presence,
ears to hear your authentic call,
hearts to understand your way of justice and hope.
May we struggle with solidarity that is real.
May we enter into relationships that open and stretch us.
Bless our journey in which we dare to hope and grow.
O Great Spirit, how we long to hear your name,
How we long to see your face.

And now we lift to you all the prayers hidden in the wordless places
of our hearts as we pray the prayer Jesus taught us.

PRAYER OF JESUS



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Sent by the Spirit

HYMN Ojibwe Travelling Song

(Intertribal)

**We a way a why a wee
We a way a why a wee
We a way a why a wee
We a way a why a wee**

OR VU 675 For the Healing of the Nations

BLESSING AND COMMISSIONING

May our footsteps on these ancient lands remind us
of creation and connectedness, in our search for truth.
May the Pine Tree, from its roots to its branches,
remind us to dig deep and reach high, in our action for justice.
May the Eagle, who soars in the sky,
remind us of the power, in our call for love.
May the expanse of the lands and seas, of the sky and stars,
remind us of God's timing in our faith in hope.
Return now to the circle of life, knowing,
That the love of Creator is with us,
The compassion of Jesus inspires us,
The hope of the Holy Spirit comforts us. Amen.

MUSIC TO SEND US FORTH

Improvisation #4 on a Passamaquoddy Dance Song (Algonquin)

End of Worship - Beginning of Service