



**HOMELESS SABBATH UNIVERSAL PRAYERS**  
**December 15, 16, 17, 2017**  
**Join us at Your House of Worship**  
***No one should be Homeless for the***  
***Holidays***

- Dear God,  
Watch over your children,  
Especially those with no home to return to at the end of long and weary days.  
Protect them from all harm and keep them from despair.  
Open the hearts and eyes of those of us with blessings to share.  
Unite our voices in a call for justice;  
So that no man need ever lay down for the night on a wooden park bench because he has no home;  
That no woman need ever tuck her children into the backseat of her car because she has no home.  
So that no child will ever wonder, “Where will I feel safe?” because he has no home;  
So that all those who wander, and all who are in need, find the shelter and the peace they seek.  
Remind us, O God, that we cannot rest fully secure in our homes each night until all your children are, at last, home. Amen.

***We are all called to serve the poor, the homeless, the sick, the hungry...***

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- Lord God,

You came to give honor to the least, those forgotten, overlooked and misjudged.

You came to give first place to the least of these, those left behind, misunderstood and undervalued.

You came to give a warm welcome to the lost, those who are orphaned, abandoned and destitute.

Help us to be your ears to listen to their cries.

Help us to be your voice speaking out love and acceptance.

Help us to be feet walking beside those in need.

Help us to be your hands to clothe, feed and shelter them.

You came for the least, the lost and last of this world.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Amen.

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● A Prayer for the Homeless

Bless the homeless, this day and every day,  
Keep them from physical and emotional harm.  
Fill their hearts with hope for the future and for today,  
Comfort the homeless as they walk their difficult paths,  
May I know that anyone, even me, can be homeless.  
Bless the homeless with enough food to sustain them,  
With enough warmth to shield them from the elements,  
With the power to wrestle personal demons and win,  
With the will to go on, and build their lives again.  
May hope touch each homeless heart, spirit & life,  
Let the kindness of others bring lasting benefits,  
Bring freedom from addiction, illness and misery,  
Open their humanity to include & embrace themselves.  
Bless the homeless with self acceptance and love,  
Spark their imaginations with belief in the future,  
Bringing the possibility of a better life,  
A safer life and a more secure life.

Amen.

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- A Litany for Homeless People

Hear our prayer today for all women and men, boys and girls who are homeless this day.

**Spirit of love, we pray for all your people.**

For those sleeping under bridges, on park benches, in doorways or bus stations.

**Spirit of mercy, hear our prayer.**

For those who can only find shelter for the night but must wander in the daytime.

**Spirit of love, be their guide.**

For families broken because they could not afford to pay the rent.

**Spirit of love, hear our prayer.**

For those who have no relatives or friends who can take them in.

**Spirit of compassion, hear our prayer.**

For those who have no place to keep possessions that remind them who they are.

**Spirit of love, hear our prayer.**

For those who have been betrayed by the social safety net.

**Spirit of love, hear our prayer.**

For all those people, we pray that you will provide shelter, security and hope.

**Spirit of love, hear our prayer.**

We pray for those of us who have warm houses and comfortable beds that we not be lulled into complacency and forgetfulness.

**Spirit of love, open our hearts that we may respond by sharing unselfishly.**

**Help us to see your face in the eyes of every homeless person we meet so that we may be empowered, through word and deed, and through the political means, to bring justice and peace to those who are homeless.**

**Amen.**

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- **Prayer from person on the street:**

Time to lay me down to sleep,  
Stone cold pillow, Cardboard sheet  
Blanket falling from the sky  
Will I be missed if I should die?

- **Poem on Compassion:**

A love like no other  
A way to connect,  
Connect with another  
A way to bring light,  
When darkness has reign,  
And show a way out,  
Of suffering and pain,  
A skill of the heart,  
That lets the heart glow  
Keeping it open  
Through torment and woe.

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## HOMELESS SABBATH DIVERSE FAITH-BASED MATERIALS

### Christian:

- Theologian Walter Bruggemann says: “The Bible itself is primarily concerned with the issue of being displaced and yearning for a place.” What we must seek for all people is safe, sanitary, and affordable housing. The church is called to not only seek to provide shelter, but we must do more than house the homeless, we must build community. Home as a promise to the homeless must be the ongoing commitment of the church. In the most materially rich nation in the world, the homeless are all around us. They are the lonely who pass their time talking to themselves in every big city and small town in the nation. They are rural families without the economic means to travel long distances to shelters and other public services. The homeless are people who have been displaced and discarded. Their numbers alone make them a nation of strangers, highly mobile and rootless, surrounded by wealth, glamor and excess of all of that which they so desperately lack.

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### Reading by Pope Francis:

- “The Son of God came into this world as a homeless person. The Son of God knew what it was to start life without a roof over his head. We can find no social or moral justification, no justification whatsoever, for lack of housing. There are many unjust situations, but we know that God is suffering with us, experiencing them at our side. He does not abandon us. We know that Jesus wanted to show solidarity with every person. He wanted everyone to experience his companionship, his help, his love. He identified with all those who suffer, who weep, who suffer any kind of injustice. We can imagine what Joseph must have been thinking. How is it that the Son of God has no home? Why are we homeless, why don't we have housing? Saint Joseph's simple questions echo in the minds of those who serve the poor even today. Like Saint Joseph, you may ask: Why are we homeless, without a place to live? ...Why do these, our brothers and sisters, have no place to live? Why are these brothers and sisters of ours homeless? These are questions which all of us might well ask. Saint Joseph never hesitated to ask questions in the face of injustice and suffering, the Pope said. But what set Saint Joseph apart was his faith in God, which gave him "the power to find light just at the moment when everything seemed dark." Faith sustained him amid the troubles of life. Thanks to faith, Joseph was able to press forward when everything seemed to be holding him back. In the same way, faith can sustain the poor and give meaning to suffering. In the face of unjust and painful situations, faith brings us the light which scatters the darkness. As it did for Joseph, faith makes us open to the quiet presence of God at every moment of our lives, in every person and in every situation. God is present in every one of you, in each one of us. Faith makes us know that God is at our side, that God is in our midst and his presence spurs us to charity. Charity is born of the call of a God who continues to knock on our door, the door of all people, to invite us to love, to compassion, to service of one another. Prayer unites us; it makes us brothers and sisters. It opens our hearts and reminds us of a beautiful truth which we sometimes forget. In prayer, we all learn to say "Father", "Dad". We learn to see one another as brothers and sisters. In prayer, there are no rich and poor people, there are sons and daughters, sisters and brothers. In prayer, there is no first or second class, there is brotherhood.
- **Isaiah 58:6-8** “This is the fasting that I wish...sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless, clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own. Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall quickly be healed.”

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- **Matthew 25:34-40** “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothed you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ The King will reply ‘Truly, I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

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### ***Latter Day Saints:***

- LDS scripture contains strongly worded warnings to those who do not take care of the poor and needy (Alma 5:55-56; Mormon 8:35-39; D & C 104:18). In the scriptures, caring for the poor is not just a question of charity; it is a question of justice. As King Benjamin explains in the Book of Mormon, nothing we have is really ours. It is given to us as a sacred trust- a stewardship- to be used for the benefit of our fellow beings.

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## **Judaism:**

Writing from Rabbi Jill Jacobs ([www.myjewishlearning.com](http://www.myjewishlearning.com)):

- “The parallel themes of homelessness and wandering pervade the Bible and Jewish history. In the first chapters of the Book of Genesis, Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden of Eden, Abraham begins his relationship with God by leaving his native land, and Jacob and his sons leave their home to go down to Egypt. After the Exodus, the Israelites journey through the wilderness, homeless for 40 years. The destruction of the first Temple in Jerusalem is followed by 70 years of exile, and the destruction of the second Temple in 70 C.E. is followed by two millennia of national homelessness, which ended only with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Jewish law offers a number of criteria for evaluating the condition of housing and a number of suggestions about responsibility to ensure that the poor have adequate housing. Central to all these laws is a concern that housing be safe, secure, and permanent, and that every home allow its inhabitants to live a full and dignified life.
- “The emphasis on the houses of God in the texts should make us especially aware of the importance of housing in our community today. We know that our congregation would suffer greatly, maybe even cease to exist, if it lost its house, our synagogue. Like a community, a family is situated in a place, their home. That place is the center of the family- where they find shelter and sustenance, as well as being the gathering place for their micro-community. It is our responsibility to work towards ensuring that everyone has a home. Today, we can do this by helping to preserve the affordability of housing in our neighborhoods, so that our neighbors are not thrown out of their homes and unable to participate in the life of the community.”
- Isaiah 58:6-8 This is the fasting that I wish...Sharing your bread the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless, clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own. Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall be quickly healed.

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### **Islamic:**

- Al-Hashr9,10 The ones who have set up housekeeping and faith before them should love anyone who has migrated to them...Those who are shielded from their own avarice will be prosperous.
- An-Nissa 8 And when (other) relatives and orphans and the needy are present at the (time of) division, then provide for them (something) out of the estate and speak to them words of appropriate kindness.
- Al-Baqarah 177 Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but (true) righteousness is (in) one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask (for help), and for freeing slaves; (and who) establishes prayer and gives zakah; (those who) fulfill their promise when they promise; and (those who) are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous.
- An-Nisa 36 Be generous to the needy wayfarer, the homeless son of the street, and the one who reaches you in a destitute condition.
- Al-Isra 26, 27 Give to the near of kin his due, and also to the needy and the wayfarers. Do not squander your wealth wastefully; for those who squander wastefully are Satan's brothers, and Satan is every ungrateful to his Lord.
- "Pay Zakat out of your property, for truly it is a purifier which purifies you, and be kind to your relatives, and acknowledge the rights of the poor, neighbors and beggars."
- "Your servants/workers are your brothers whom God the most High has placed under your authority. Therefore, a person who had a brother under his authority, should feed him out of that which he eats himself; he should not assign work to him which is beyond his capacity, and if you do so, then help him in his work." (Bukhari collection)

-Prophet Muhammad , peace and blessings of God be upon him

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### **Buddhist:**

- In the *Kutadanta Sutta*, the Buddha suggested economic development instead of force to reduce crime. The government should use the country's resources to improve the economic conditions of the country. It could embark on agricultural and rural development, provide financial support to entrepreneurs and business, provide adequate wages for workers to maintain a decent life with human dignity.
- Buddhist Texts Wanderer:

Wanderer, the road is your footsteps, nothing else;  
Wander, there is no path,  
You lay down a path in walking. In walking, you lay down a path and when turning around  
You see the road you'll never step on again. Wanderer, path there is none,  
Only tracks on the ocean foam.

“However many holy words you read, however many you speak, what good will they do you if you do not act upon them?” -The Buddha

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### **Sikh:**

- Sikh Fifth Guru “No one is my enemy, nor is anyone a stranger to me.”
- Guru Granth Sahib “The poor and the rich are both brothers. This is Lord’s immutable design.”

### **Unitarian Universalist:**

- The First Principal: The inherent worth and dignity of every person.
- The Second Principal: Justice, equity and compassion in human relations.
- The Sixth Principal: The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all.

### **Indigenous Traditions/Earth Based Spiritualities:**

- **American Indigenous Grandfather** Sacred One, teach us love, compassion and honor, that we Peoples may heal the earth and heal each other.

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