



NEW JERSEY ADVOCACY NETWORK TO END HOMELESSNESS

Prayers, Litany and Petitions for Worship

The following may be used in and/or adapted for worship during the Homeless Memorial Sabbath the weekend of December 18-20. These prayers may be used as intercessions in the Prayers of the People in liturgical churches, or they may be used or incorporated into whatever format is used in your tradition

Dear God, facing the year's darkest night, we ask that you remember those of your children who are without homes or shelter. As your child Jesus ended his first night asleep in a manger, when there was no other place for him and his family, we pray that you would bring safety and shelter to those who find no room in our communities. We give thanks for those who offer support and help so that some can move out of homelessness. We ask for guidance as we, your church, advocate for a society that truly protects and cares for all. We pray this in the name of Christ. Amen

Lord God, (on this day of memorial,) we remember your sons and daughters who have died this past year as a result of homelessness, including (insert names here), and those we name in our hearts. We also remember those who were so on the margins of society, that their life and death may only be known to you. We pray that all may finally find shelter in your eternal loving embrace.

L: Dear God, help us remember our community's homeless men and women. Remind us of Christ's concern for the good of all.

C: We ask: Lord, when did we see you hungry?

L: How easy it is to ignore the person begging us for change. We quickly walk past them, reassuring ourselves that they wouldn't use the money for food anyway.

C: Lord, when did we see you thirsty?

L: Even our fast food restaurants deny people water or access to bathrooms, scared of driving away "paying customers".

C: Lord, when were you a stranger?

L: We cut necessary public services and funding for shelters, never thinking about how these decisions affect the lives of so many.

C: Lord, when were you naked?

L: Our malls are packed with people shopping for the holidays. How often do we remember to buy a warm sweater or two for donation?

C: Lord, when were you sick or lonely?

L: God will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me." Stir our hearts to compassionately respond and move our feet to advocate with our homeless brothers and sisters for change. Change our minds, change our neighborhoods, and change our world. In Christ's name we pray, amen.

Lord, In this time together, as we gather to remember your homeless children who died this past year, we ask that you forgive us for the ways, known and unknown, in which we forget or transgress your command to care for the needy and the poor. Lord, renew our spirits on this day of remembrance, so that we might leave this place with greater resolve to care for our homeless brothers and sisters in ways that might reflect your love and faithfulness. We ask this in your own holy name. Amen

Compassionate God, we ask for forgiveness for the ways in which we have denied care and comfort particularly to our homeless brothers and sisters. Lord, we gather today, to remember and mourn them, and also to find hope in your promises given in Scripture. Therefore we dare to ask you to provide safety, blessing, deliverance, and security to your needy children. And Lord, we ask that you help and prepare us to mirror your care and steadfast love, so that we might better serve all of your people. We ask this in the name of Christ, who came to love and save us. Amen.