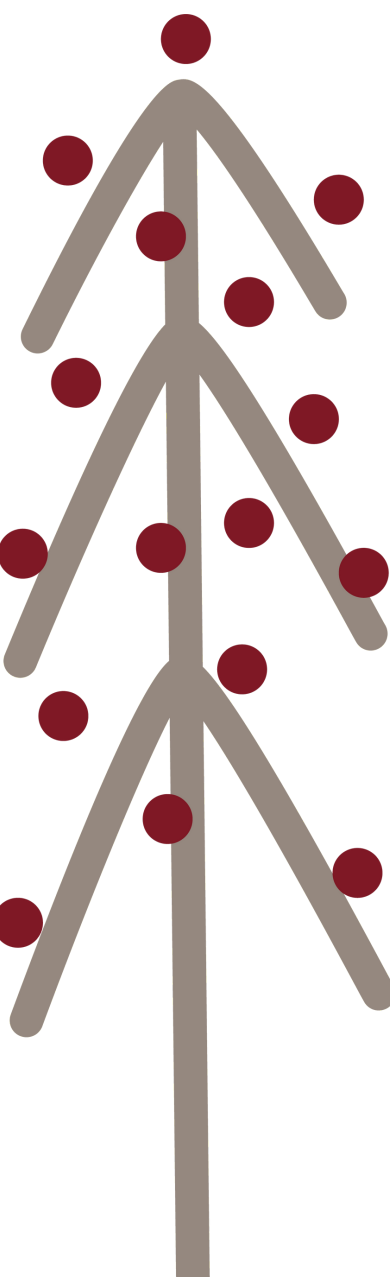


Homeless

the fourth Sunday of Advent

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Luke 2: 6-7 (NIV)

And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

Micah 6:8 (NiRV)

The Lord has shown you what is good. He has told you what he requires of you. You must treat people fairly, you must love others faithfully and you must be very careful to live the way your God wants you to.



When the government of the day issued an order that all people were to return to their ancestral town for a census, Joseph and Mary made the journey to Bethlehem. The town was so overcrowded with travellers that they could find nowhere to stay except in a stable with animals. There, Mary gave birth to Jesus . . . because there was no room for them in the inn.

In Canada, today, many *experience* those same words - there is no room for them. Homelessness. No place to stay. Homelessness: *the situation of an individual, family, or community without stable, safe, permanent or appropriate housing.* No room.

What do we say to these things? Before we speak, let's first listen to what the Lord is saying in our verses from Micah 6.

God tells us that we must **act justly**. In other words, act with fairness, honesty, and integrity. There is an old saying that honesty is the best policy." But for believers, honesty is the *only* policy.

We must **love mercy**. We are to fill our hearts with compassion and kindness toward one another. Meaning we don't just do acts of kindness from a sense of duty or obedience. We do them out of love.

We are to **walk humbly** with our God. Did you notice that God's first two expectations have nothing to do with Him per se. They have everything to do with how we behave toward one another.

Act justly. Love mercy. Walk humbly with God. What do Micah's words from God have to do with the bare facts of Jesus' birth - that He was born in a stable because there was no room in an inn?

I live in the downtown core of a large city. I see men, women, boys and girls daily on the streets because there is no room for them anywhere. They beg on the corner, go through garbage dumps, sleep behind bushes, and stand in long lines to receive food. They are from every walk of life; from different nationalities and different cultures.

When God sent us His only Son, there should have been a large joyous celebration - the King has come! Instead, Jesus was born in a manger, in a stable, with the very animals He created, visited by shepherds and wise men.

What message does God want us to know? He wants us to make room. Let one of the bright lights people see this Christmas be yours, welcoming them . . . because you made room for them.

