

Resolution

Subject: Creation of a Moravian Team for Housing Justice
From: Advocacy & Justice Committee

WHEREAS, housing is literally the foundation of stability and security for individuals and families. The United Nations declaration of Human Rights declares housing as a human right, like the right to food and clothing. Yet, at least 580,466 people in the United States were homeless on a given night in January of 2020, 30% of which included families with children.¹ These pre-pandemic statistics are now low, and with the end of the federal eviction moratorium, another 3.7 million people are reporting housing insecurity, meaning they are likely to be evicted within the next two months²; and

WHEREAS, those experiencing homelessness are likely to be the most vulnerable of our neighbors, including but not limited to children, persons with disabilities, the chronically poor, victims of domestic violence and sexual trafficking, veterans suffering from PTSD and traumatic brain injuries, individuals with severe and persistent mental illness, LGBTQIA identifying persons, persons with substance use disorder, and the recently incarcerated; and

WHEREAS, our nation's history of discriminatory and exclusionary housing practices have disproportionately impacted communities of color, perpetuating residential segregation by contributing to disinvestment and neglect in neighborhoods where people of color and lower-income families live and blocking access to safe, affordable, stable neighborhoods³; and

WHEREAS, the 18th century Moravian Church practiced mutual aid and care for one another. The choir system, close-knit groups assembled by gender, age, and relationship status, ensured that no one fell through the cracks and all were sheltered, fed, and cared for - physically and spiritually - from cradle to grave; and

WHEREAS, the 8th century BCE prophet Micah declared: "Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid." (Micah 4:4) This biblical text promises everyone a place to rest, a right to ownership, safety, and abundance (II Kings 18:31; Is. 36:16; Zech.3:10). These and other Scripture passages assert that everyone has a right to a place to call home. Consider Isaiah 32:18, "And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."; and

WHEREAS, God continues to speak to us about what we are to do in the face of injustice, exploitation, racism and mistreatment of fellow humans. When Micah 6:8 asks what response is required of us, God urges us to “do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God.”; and

WHEREAS, the *Ground of the Unity* strongly urges us to serve our neighbor: “Our Lord Jesus entered into this world’s misery to bear it and to overcome it. We seek to follow Him in serving His brothers and sisters. Like the love of Jesus, this service knows no bounds. Therefore we pray the Lord ever anew to point to us the way to reach our neighbors, opening our hearts and hands to them in their need.”⁴; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the 2022 MCSP Synod responds to these Biblical and doctrinal calls to action through the creation of a Moravian Team for Housing Justice, made up of volunteers with the energy and expertise to support congregational, community, and provincial efforts to ensure that all of God’s children have good places to live and thrive (Lev. 25: 35-36); and be it

RESOLVED, that this group explores ways the members of the MCSP can use their considerable gifts of time, talent, and treasure to ensure safety, belonging, and dignity for all people through service, action, and advocacy around issues of housing and homelessness; and be it

RESOLVED, that Synod calls for the team to partner with organizations in communities where Moravians are present in the Southern Province to promote housing that is fair, safe, and affordable, which includes the proposed actions as outlined in the accompanying appendix, entitled, “Recommendations - Moravian Team for Housing Justice”; and be it

RESOLVED, that the team partners with the Moravian Ministries Foundation in America to create a fund (or funds) of strategic giving opportunities that address the crisis of housing in communities where Moravian churches are located; and be it

RESOLVED, that both the MCSP and congregations consider how their current land, facilities, properties, and resources might be used for the benefit of their neighborhoods and communities, including ways to benefit those unstably housed or without housing; and be it

RESOLVED, that the Team for Housing Justice report on their work, with an emphasis on identifying the ministries, partnerships, and opportunities for congregational and provincial engagement on this issue to the PEC during the intersynodal period and to the Synod of 2026.

Note: The Mission Committee has also reviewed and approved of this proposal.

Appendix: Creation of a Moravian Team for Housing Justice

The Advocacy & Justice Committee, along with the Mission Committee, urge the formation of a **Moravian Team for Housing Justice**, made up of volunteers with the energy and expertise to support congregational, community, and provincial efforts to ensure that all of God's children have good places to live and thrive.

This group would be empowered by Synod to explore ways in which the members of the MCSP can use their considerable gifts of time, talent, and treasure to ensure safety, belonging, and dignity for all people and puts our faith into action by:

- Supporting and/or creating opportunities for all people to live in safe, stable, and affordable housing; and
- Responding compassionately and practically to human needs (which might mean helping to build, renovate, and preserve homes).
- Creating easily accessible opportunities for service and training for Moravians in the Southern Province to engage the physical opportunities that result from the work of the Moravian Team for Housing Justice.

Ideally, this team partners with organizations in communities where Moravians are present to promote housing that is fair, safe, and affordable, and which includes the following actions of the Moravian Team for Housing Justice:

- Curate and/or develop resource materials, including story and liturgy, to expand shared knowledge and understanding of the complex issues related to affordable housing and our call to create communities where all people have “sure dwellings”;
- Undertake a general inventory of the various housing and housing-related ministries in which Moravian congregations and members are engaged, including ministries done in partnership with organizations in local communities; and
- Advocate for state and local policies which create and protect safe, affordable housing options for everyone.

Through a strategic partnership with the Moravian Ministries Foundation, the team will help facilitate giving opportunities to address the crisis of housing in communities where Moravian churches are located in the Southern Province. Such opportunities could include funding for local community or provincial efforts, help establish a fund for any congregation desiring to build or rehab affordable housing, and could even pay for feasibility studies on such projects.