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City Mission’s theme for our 200th Anniversary Year
“Repairing the Breach” (based on Isaiah 58:6-12)

For 200 years City Mission along with its congregational partners has stood in the gap with those who are oppressed, disinherit, and disenfranchised. Today the words of the prophet Isaiah continue to call to us as more and more families fall into homelessness in Boston and its surrounding communities. What we do about this along with the other challenges of poverty and racism are the work of the religious community.

Isaiah 58:6-12

“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? 7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? 8 Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. 9 Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer you shall cry, and God will say, Here I am. “If you take away from the midst of you the yoke, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, 10 if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. 11 And the Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your desire with good things, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. 12 And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in. (Revised Standard Version)

City Mission celebrates the past and embraces a new future as we follow God to be repairers of the breach. God is still speaking and calling us to righteousness and justice.

We hope that you will find new insights and inspiration from this wonderful passage of scripture.
Prayer for City Mission’s 200th Anniversary

Most Holy Creator, we your children love a good party – we love celebrations of all kinds because that is how you made us! Alleluia!! As we joyfully celebrate 200 years of service through the work of City Mission and all partner churches that respond to the call to join in service to all God’s people, we return to King David’s prayer of thanksgiving in Psalm 100:

1Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. 2Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. 3Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. 4Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. 5For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endures to all generations.

Oh Holy One, we ask that you place on the hearts of your loving brothers and sisters, a heart-felt desire to listen to the cry of those that suffer from need – the need of a comfortable and safe home, a nutritious meal, a community of compassion and love. Help us LORD to hear Your call to each of us to be in service to those in need and to answer that call in manners acceptable to you. We pray in the Holy name of the One who redeems us, Jesus Christ, Amen.
Candle-Lighting Prayer

1st Person: I will light a light in the name of God who lit the world and breathed the breath of life into all people; red and yellow, black and white; rich and poor; gay and straight; documented and undocumented; citizens and residents -- all God's children - all our sisters and brothers.

2nd Person: I will light a light in the name of the Son, the refugee born in a stable, the Christ who stretched out his hand to all people of the world.

3rd Person: I will light a light in the name of the Spirit who embraces the world and travels with each and every one of us. The Spirit of hope and love and peace.

4th Person: I will light a light in the name of every homeless person living in the shadows, in a car or a shelter, or under a bridge, praying for life and legislation that will help them to find affordable housing and a safe place to live for themselves and their families.

5th Person: I will light a light of hope that will outshine the darkness and illuminate the day that no one in this great country will have to live without a home, that no one will go hungry or without the basic necessities of life.

May these lights shine in all of our hearts and open them to compassion, and a commitment to do all in our power to create a world of justice and peace and safety for those who are homeless.

Author unknown but contributed by the Reverend Susan Brecht, Senior Pastor Eliot Church of Newton UCC, MA
Walter Rauschenbush Prayer

“The spirit of the Society through these one hundred and fifty years has been well expressed in this prayer by Walter Rauschenbush.”

Grant us a vision of our city, fair as she might be; a city of justice, where no one shall prey on others; a city of plenty, where vice and poverty shall cease to fester; a city of brotherhood, where all success shall be founded on service, and honor shall be given to nobleness alone; a city of peace, where order shall not rest on force, but on the love of all for the city, the great mother of the common life and weal. Hear thou, O Lord, the silent prayer of all our hearts as we each pledge our time and strength and thought to speed the day of her coming beauty and righteousness.

Did You Know?

- Homeless families in Massachusetts account for 64% of the total homeless population, as opposed to 36% nationally.
- In 2015 there were 1,543 homeless families in the City of Boston. This is a 25% increase over the City’s 2014 homeless census.
- A family of three, with an income of 30% of the area median income, can afford to pay $636 a month on housing. A fair-market two-bedroom apartment in Metro-Boston is $1,454 a month.

City Mission begins its third century with a sharpened focus to prevent homelessness. City Mission’s A Lift Up is a solution to the growing problem, of family homelessness in Boston. Mia is just one of the many mothers who completed the program and turned her situation around. Visit our website to learn about this successful program which is changing lives.

How can you help prevent homelessness?

- Pray for all families but particularly for families that are struggling to remain housed. Read Isaiah 58:6-12.
- Visit our website
- Connect with us and invite someone from City Mission to come and share about our work and talk about ways that we can partner together to prevent homelessness.

Holy One, empower us to be a bold participant in healing our world. Liberate all people suffering from greed, poverty and oppression. There is no easy road so help us to act together as a united people for the birth of a new world. Amen

City Mission’s A Lift Up Program Gives Hope and Transforms Lives

A year ago, Mia was referred to City Mission because she was in danger of losing her housing. In her early thirties, she was attempting to make it on her own with her two children after being married for several years. Mia sought help from a Boston nonprofit for domestic abuse and ultimately decided to end her marriage. Her husband had controlled all their finances and she had no friends or family to support her move.

A Lift Up enabled Mia to get the financial education and assistance she needed that prevented her and her family from falling into homelessness. In addition, she has found a group of friends among the other mothers that attend the monthly empowerment groups meetings which are a part of the A Lift Up Program.

Although not all of them have been through the grueling experience she has, they all know poverty and can support her as she addresses the challenges of being a single parent. Because of her assistance from City Mission, Mia will be able to support herself and her two sons for the long term.

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Special Hymn composed for the 200th Anniversary of City Mission

“Called to Walk with Sister, Brother”

This commemorative hymn was composed by Erik K. Gustafson who lives in the Boston area. Having earned degrees from Harvard College and Indiana University, School of Music in Bloomington, Indiana. Erik has completed about one hundred thirty “neo-tonal” and largely “classical” works to date. His music can be heard on his YouTube channel and on CD recordings. Erik’s music can often be heard at Old South Church in Boston, where he serves as Composer-in-Residence.
Called to Walk with Sister, Brother: A Hymn

Words and Music: Erik K. Gustafson

Based on Isaiah 58:6-12

Written for the 200th Anniversary of City Mission (Boston, Massachusetts), founded in 1816
For Rev. June R. Cooper, Executive Director, City Mission

REFRAIN:

Called to walk with sister, brother -

As Isaiah, may we choose: To

love, with grace to serve each other,
Of God's promised realm share news.

VERSES:

From age to age, the same themes run: In
In our own time, dire ill we face: To
May we re mem ber fore bears true, Who
As we em bark on this new age, With

morn ings new, in work ings done
see an other with ous place; In
found ed and in wis ings A
joy and with ex am ples sage, Let
wealth a - plen - ty, gifts a - bound; 
love's strong fab - ric may we find: 
city fair, a mis - sion good, That 
us in kind ly words and deeds: Pray

friends need can still be found. 
place for all and care in kind. 
strong with time have firm ly stood. 
peace, lift up, still sow love's seeds.

FINAL REFRAIN:

Called to walk with sis - ter, broth - er -
As I sa - iah, may we choose: To
love, with grace to serve each other,
Of God's promised realm share news.