

Prayers and Worship Resources for Refugee Sunday



The following are a selection of prayers from Anglican and other denominational sources which could be used for Refugee Sunday. At the end are a list of hymn suggestions from *Common Praise*.

Worship Resources for World Refugee Day 2018 – PWRDF

This 21-page resource contains prayers, dramatic readings, sermonettes, a children's feature, contemporary music suggestions and more.

<https://pwrdf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/World-Refugee-Day-worship-resource.pdf>

Immigrant Apostle's Creed (Rev. Jose Luis Casal)

I believe in Almighty God,
who guided the people in exile and in exodus,
the God of Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon,
the God of foreigners and immigrants.

I believe in Jesus Christ, a displaced Galilean,
who was born away from his people and his home,
who fled his country with his parents when his life was in danger.
When he returned to his own country
he suffered under the oppression of Pontius Pilate,
the servant of a foreign power.
Jesus was persecuted, beaten, tortured and unjustly condemned to death.
But on the third day Jesus rose from the dead,
not as a scorned foreigner but to offer us citizenship in God's kingdom.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the eternal immigrant from God's kingdom among us,
who speaks all languages, lives in all countries,
and reunites all races.

I believe that the Church is the secure home
for foreigners and for all believers.

I believe that the communion of saints begins
when we embrace all God's people in all their diversity.

Source: <https://claytonfaulkner.com/2017/10/20/weekly-worship-thought-the-immigrant-apostles-creed/>

A Moment for Grace: A Prayer for Refugees (Catholic Relief Services)

God of our Wandering Ancestors,

Long have we known
That your heart is with the refugee:
That you were born into time
In a family of refugees
Fleeing violence in their homeland,
Who then gathered up their hungry child
And fled into alien country.

Their cry, your cry, resounds through the ages:
“Will you let me in?”

Give us hearts that break open
When our brothers and sisters turn to us with that same cry.
Then surely all these things will follow:
Ears will no longer turn deaf to their voices.
Eyes will see a moment for grace instead of a threat.
Tongues will not be silenced but will instead advocate.
And hands will reach out—
working for peace in their homeland,
working for justice in the lands where they seek safe haven.

Lord, protect all refugees in their travels.
May they find a friend in me
And so make me worthy
Of the refuge I have found in you. Amen.

Source: Catholic Relief Services: <https://www.crs.org/sites/default/files/usops-resources/a-moment-for-grace-4.pdf>

A prayer of Indigenous peoples, Refugees, Immigrants and Pilgrims (Mark Charles):

Triune God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
we come before you as many parts of a single body.
people drawn from every tribe,
every nation, every language;
some indigenous—peoples of the land;
some refugees, immigrants, pilgrims—people on the move;
some hosts, some guests, some both hosts and guests;
all of us searching for an eternal place where we can belong.

Creator, forgive us.
The earth is yours and everything that is in it.
But we forget.
In our arrogance we think we own it.
In our greed we think we can steal it.
In our ignorance we worship it.
In our thoughtlessness we destroy it.
We forget that you created the earth to bring praise and joy to you.
That you gave it as a gift,
for us to steward,
for us to enjoy,
for us to see more clearly your beauty and your majesty.

Jesus, save us.

We wait for your kingdom.
We long for your throne.
We hunger for your reconciliation,
for that day where people from every tribe and every tongue
will gather around you and sing your praises.

Holy Spirit, teach us.
Help us to remember
that the body is made up of many parts,
each one unique and every one necessary.
Teach us to embrace the discomfort that comes from our diversity
and to celebrate the fact that we are unified, not through our sameness,
but through the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Triune God, we love you.
Your creation is beautiful.
Your salvation is merciful.
And your wisdom is beyond compare.

We pray all this in Jesus's name.

Amen.

Source: <http://www.findingsolace.org/a-prayer-of-indigenous-peoples-refugees-immigrants-pilgrims/>

God Beyond Borders

God beyond borders,
we bless you for strange places and different dreams,
for the demands and diversity of a wider world,
for the distance that lets us look back and re-evaluate,
for new ground where the broken stems can take root, grow and blossom.

We bless you for the friendship of strangers,
the richness of other cultures
and the painful gift of freedom.
Blessed are you, God beyond borders.
But if we have overlooked the exiles in our midst,
heightened their exclusion by our indifference,
given our permission for a climate of fear,
and tolerated a culture of violence,
Have mercy on us.
God who takes side with justice.
Confront our prejudice;
stretch our narrowness;
sift out our laws and our lives with the penetrating insight of your Spirit
until generosity is our only measure. Amen.

Source: "Refugee Evensong" by Woolman House Community, Liverpool, England. Published by KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives in *Seeking Shelter: Advent 2012 Ecumenical Resource for Justice Seekers*

Prayer for Migrants and Refugees (Presbyterian Church in Canada)

God of life and freedom,

When Abraham's family wandered,
when Moses took refuge in the desert,
when the Hebrew people fled into the wilderness,
when the Israelites lived in exile,
you called them, and gave them words of comfort,
promises of hope, and shelter under your everlasting arms.

In Christ you crossed the border.
You put on frail flesh,
were born and lived your life
always on the move in a dangerous world.
From your first night you slept in a bed and
a place that was not your own.
You and your family fled terror and found refuge in foreign lands.
You were not always sure of your next meal.

We remember before you
the millions of people whose lives are more like yours
than we can imagine or care to acknowledge:
those who are without homes,
who have been uprooted from their communities and countries,
who have had to flee for their lives,
who have left families and friends,
who live precarious lives.

We pray for your protection and care for those who suffer and must take refuge because of war, politics, natural disaster, status, race, gender, sexuality, and faith. We remember before you those separated from their families: children removed from their parents, siblings lost to one another, spouses and friends separated. We mourn and we are angered by the loss that marks the lives of so many: the loss of dignity, of respect, of security, of community, of family, and of stability.

We pray for the people of this country and of the church, that we may not be indifferent or naïve, afraid or overwhelmed, discouraged or blind to hope and options to help or silent in the call for justice. You have made us citizens of your kingdom, open our hearts and our doors to receive the stranger, the widow and the orphan and all who are dear to you, and strengthen us to witness to the love of God for all people; and open our mouths to call for justice.

In the name of Jesus, we pray.

Source: The Presbyterian Church of Canada: A Prayer for Migrants and Refugees <https://presbyterian.ca/2018/06/20/prayer-for-migrants-and-refugees/>

A Prayer for World Refugee Day (Salvation Army)

O God listen to my cry! Hear my prayer! From the ends of the earth, I cry to you for help when my heart is overwhelmed. Lead me to the towering rock of safety, for you are my safe refuge. (from Psalm 61 NLT)

O Lord, you hear our cries. You know our fears. You know the physical and emotional dangers that we face. Before we have even taken one step on our journey, you have seen the whole path we must take, and you walk each step with us. Guide us and protect us as we travel together through uncertain places.

Make us aware of those who journey towards us as refugees. Open our eyes to see their need of protection. Open our hearts to welcome them into our communities. Guide us on how best to speak up for their rights and fight for their cause without speaking over them. Let us not discriminate between “us” and “them” when all you see is your beloved children.

Do not let us be indifferent to the needs of others but let us remember all you have done for us when we were in need, so that we may now give from what we have to help others.

We pray for refugees around the world, and ask that you would hide those whose enemies seek to harm them as you kept David hidden from King Saul. Guide those who do not know where to go next as you led the Israelites out of captivity in Egypt. Protect those who are running from danger as you protected the Holy Family running from King Herod.

Mighty King, you do not turn anyone away from full citizenship in your kingdom. Your people praise you in countless languages, singing Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty!

Amen.

Source: A Prayer for World Refugee Day: Salvation Army in Canada & Bermuda <https://salvationist.ca/articles/a-prayer-for-world-refugee-day/>

Prayer for Asylum Seekers (United Church of Canada)

Compassionate One,
our society has failed you.
You were a refugee, seeking safety and freedom,
and we did not welcome you.
You were naked and exposed, with inadequate shelter and insufficient pay,
and we did not fight with you for equal rights.
You were fearful of being detained or deported without a just trial,
and we did not provide you sanctuary.
We seek forgiveness for the ways we have forsaken you,
and offer our thanks for the communities,
people, and organizations who have
extended welcome,
advocated for justice; and
provided sanctuary to people seeking refuge despite opposition.

Teacher,
your instructions are clear:
We shall not oppress migrant people, nor deprive them of justice,
nor practice extortion or commit robbery against them;*
We shall love strangers as ourselves,
for we have all been strangers;
We shall share our harvest, our homes, and our lives with others,
thus extending the same hospitality that you have selflessly shared.
We shall advocate for the human rights of all people.
Give us the steadfast persistence needed to follow your commandments
in these challenging times,
remembering that the love and respect that we show to each other
is the love that we show to you,
our Compassionate Teacher.
Amen

* See Exodus 22:21; Deuteronomy 10:18-19, 24:21; Ezekiel 22:29

Source: United Church of Canada, A prayer on the occasion of [Refugee Rights Day in Canada](https://united-church.ca/prayers/prayer-asylum-seekers), <https://united-church.ca/prayers/prayer-asylum-seekers>

A Prayer for Refugees and Displaced Persons (Steve Plenert, Mennonite Central Committee)

Lord Jesus Christ, we remember that in your infancy you were a refugee. The political leaders of your country sought to end your life as an infant. Your parents took you to another country in secret. We don't know, dear Lord, how long you had to stay there.

Help us, O Lord, to grow in compassion for those who are displaced from their homes in our day. Help us not to see them only as problems, statistics or threats. Help us to see refugees as fellow humans who have been forced to flee their homes.

O God, we know refugees and displaced persons must make excruciating decisions, and we ask for your mercy upon them. We ask for mercy for parents who take children from their homes. Mercy for children who leave parents too weak to travel. Mercy for those who choose to stay for whatever reasons and who live with severe consequences for those choices. We ask for mercy for those whose housing is inadequate – cold in winter, hot in summer, insufficient for privacy or hygiene or satisfaction. Have mercy on your children who have left their homes, O Lord.

O God, we know – sometimes too well – the causes of displacement and migration. We pray for the situations that have led to the refugee crises in our world. We pray for those who promote extremist ideologies, that they would change their ways and not choose violence. We pray for repressive regimes, that they would seek to engage people in building freedom. We pray for human smugglers and traffickers who prey upon those who have fled their homes, that they may stop victimizing the fearful and vulnerable.

Help us, O Lord, to be compassionate and to know how we can help those who have been displaced. Help us to know when it is time for humanitarian relief, when it is time for resettlement, and when advocacy for peace and change is what is needed most. Give us courage and strength to be people of compassion and justice in the face of complex and overwhelming demands.

We know that you love all people, dear Lord. Help us to be the instruments of your love and peace in the world. Amen.

Source: Mennonite Central Committee: <https://mccottawaoffice.wordpress.com/2015/08/12/a-prayer-for-refugees-and-displaced-persons/>

Prayer for Refugees (Canadian Lutheran World Relief)

God our refuge, we hold in heart and mind those who flee their homes and who seek safety in a new place. We cannot imagine the fear, the uncertainty, the discomfort of leaving what one has known to venture to the unknown, often with little or nothing in their possession. May we be filled with a spirit of compassion and grace to welcome with open arms those who come to us in need. Show us a way of hospitality, help us to be generous; bring peace where there is turmoil. In the name of your dear Son, Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Source: Canadian Lutheran World Relief, Worship Resources for World Refugee Day
<https://www.clwr.org/sites/default/files/documents/WRD%20Worship%20Resources%202015%20FINAL.pdf>

Litany for Refugees

Leader: Mighty Lord, as you guided the Israelites through the wilderness,

People: be a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day for refugees in search of new hope and new life.

Leader: As you brought the Israelites out of bondage to freedom,

People: bring refugees out of persecution to safety.

Leader: As you protected the Israelites through 40 years in the desert,

People: protect those who languish for years in refugee camps.

Leader: Wipe away their tears of sorrow,

People: that their mourning may give way to joyous hope.

Leader: Put an end to warfare and tyranny,

People: that some may return home without fear of violence.

Leader: Open the doors of safer nations,

People: that some may find new homes in new lands.

Leader: Rebuild their lives,

People: that they might enjoy the fruit of labours in peace.

Leader: Restore their material goods,

People: that they might sustain their families in prosperity.

Leader: Revive their hope,

People: that they might face a future with promise.

Leader: Shine your grace upon them,

People: that they might know your love.

Leader: Strengthen their bonds of friendship and family,

People: that they might serve one another with encouraging love.

Leader: And inspire your churches to welcome the stranger,

People: that together we might build communities of hope where strangers become neighbours and friends, and brothers and sisters. Amen.

Source: Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, www.lirs.org, printed in Canadian Lutheran World Relief, Worship Resources for World Refugee Day

<https://www.clwr.org/sites/default/files/documents/WRD%20Worship%20Resources%202015%20FINAL.pdf>

Hymn Suggestions (*Common Praise*)

- Jesus Calls Us Here To Meet Him (CP 59)
- As We Gather at Your Table (CP 61)
- Here in This Place New Light Is Streaming (CP 465)
- In Christ There is No East or West (CP 484)
- Where Charity and Love Prevail (CP 487)
- Sister, Let Me Be Your Servant (CP 500)
- You are Salt for the Earth (CP 502)
- Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us With Your Love (CP 504)
- Here, O Lord, Your Servants Gather (CP 534)
- Can I See Another's Woe (CP 544)
- Ubi Caritas et Amor (CP 553)
- Let There be Light (CP 572)
- Let Streams of Living Justice (575)
- For the Healing of the Nations (CP 576)
- Lord, Who Left the Highest Heaven (CP 581)
- Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service (CP 585)
- O God of Every Nation (CP 593)
- You Call Us Out to Praise You (CP 600)
- God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending (CP 601)
- Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost (CP 653)