

World Refugee Day worship liturgy

by Brian Dyck

GATHERING

June 20th is World Refugee Day. There are more than 65 million people in the world today who have been displaced by conflict—some for decades. To put that into perspective, it's almost twice the population of Canada. As part of the global church, we are familiar with stories of displacement due to fear, hatred and violence—from the biblical narratives of Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Ruth and Jesus, to the early days of the church, right up until the present. We also acknowledge that people have been displaced in the very name of the God we worship. As we reflect on these stories, we heed the biblical call to welcome the stranger (Matthew 25:35) and help refugees on their journey from fear to hope.

Today we grieve, we hope, we rejoice in our roles of both refugee and host in the presence of our faith community gathered in this place. Let us pray together.

OPENING PRAYER

God of the sojourner and the settled one, we come before you this day in gratitude for the places we call home. We are grateful for these places where we have felt warm and have been fed, protected and loved. In this sacred place and this sacred time, we turn our minds and hearts toward those who do not have a place to call home, do not have a roof over their heads, do not have enough food, do not know peace. Help us hold them and ourselves prayerfully before you. Guide us this day so your peace may be known and your Word may be revealed to us. AMEN.



LITANY

Leader: With the people in Uganda we say:

Congregation: A refugee from South Sudan is my brother.

L: With the people of Bangladesh we say:

C: A refugee from Myanmar is my sister.

L: With the people of Lebanon we say:

C: A refugee from Syria is my cousin.

L: With the people of Ecuador we say:

C: A refugee from Colombia is my mother.

L: With the people of South Africa we say:

C: A refugee from Congo is my father.

L: With the people of Kenya we say:

C: A refugee from Somalia is my niece.

L: With the people of Germany we say:

C: A refugee from Eritrea is my grandmother.

L: With the people of [our community] we say:

C: Refugees from around the world are my relatives.

L: Like God's people of old, in thanksgiving, we remember and say:

C: A wandering Aramean is my ancestor (Deuteronomy 26:5).

L: We remember, O God, how others welcomed us and our kin as family, and we desire to respond in the same way. Help us be family to those who have lost their homes and their communities. AMEN.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION



Our loving and compassionate God, we know you grieve

where there is violence,
where there is oppression,
where there is hatred
in the world.

We know you stand with the refugees in our world today,
just as you stood with our ancestors in the faith who were
compelled to flee their homes,

like Moses,
like Ruth,
like Jeremiah,
like Paul,
and even like Jesus and his parents.

We pray for comfort for those who mourn. We hold before you

those who have lost their homes,
those who have lost their communities,
those who have lost their families.

We grieve with them and long to reach out to them to bring
your healing comfort.

We pray for peace, O God. We pray that those who bring war
will change their ways and beat their swords into plowshares.
We pray for meaningful reconciliation in broken communities
where hate is sown in the soil of prejudice and watered by our
indifference.

We pray for courage and wisdom as we look for ways to be your agents of comfort and peace in a world that needs your holy and healing touch. We pray this in the name of Jesus. AMEN.

OFFERING PRAYER

Thank you, God, for walls and a roof, for a floor, for windows and doors. Thank you for food, for clean water, for clothing. Thank you for the opportunities we have to learn and grow in peace and dignity. We pray today for all those who have had to leave behind these things in the many places there is conflict.

Thank you, God, for the bounty we have and for the chance to share.

Thank you, God, for peace in our community. We hold up to you the many who run from war, who seek peace and safety and wholeness. In gratitude we share what we have with them. May our gifts of money, time and love be a blessing that flows from us to those in need. In Jesus' name we pray. AMEN.

BENEDICTION

Go now from this place of worship into the world.

Go proclaiming the peace of Christ which passes all understanding.

Go caring for the sojourner in our land and in the world. AMEN.

For more information and MCC resources related to uprooted people, visit: mcccanada.ca/refugees

