

Liturgy: Offering Hospitality to Refugees

Call to Worship:

Leader: Lord, we are your gathered people, come together to be one with refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people whose lives have been dislocated by war, famine and injustice. By our presence here we express our solidarity with them in their search for a new life, a new home, a new promise.

All: Lord clear our eyes that we may see the suffering of the refugee.
Open our ears that we may hear the cries of those deep in despair.
Release our feet that we may walk on paths where some comfort we may spread.
Unloose our tongues that we might speak your words of hope and love.
Give us open hearts that we may be truly hospitable to the stranger in our midst.

The Gathering:

Lighting three candles.

First Person: I light a light in the name of God who created all people: red, yellow, black, white and brown and who calls us to set the captives free.

Second Person: I light a light in the name of the refugee Christ whose persecution has given hope and life to the entire world.

Third Person: I light a light in the spirit of truth, hope, and justice to light the path of freedom for all. For what does the Lord require of us but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God. (Micah 6:8)

The Life of a Refugee:

You are a refugee. You cannot dance here. (*Only two buckets of water a day.*)

You cannot pass outside this gate. Ever. (*Fish oil, charcoal, two chicken wings, rice.*)

You must work for our government in community labour. No pay

(*Asbestos in walls, concrete floors, two people per hole.*)

You are lying to us. Your father was not a soldier.

(*Interview: wait, wait, wait. Reject, reject, reject.*)

You must have a white card to work. You cannot cross this line without a special pass.

(*Suffocating heat. No fan.*)

You drank too much last night. Go to jail.

(*Baby screaming. Voices shouting.*)

You have entered our country without permission.

You have disgraced yourself because you left your own country.

Have you no shame? (*Monique Thormann, From the Refugee participation Network, Oxford*)

Prayer of Confession:

Leader: Knowing that our God walks with us in our confusion, our doubts, our failings, our struggles, we now come humbly before God to ask for mercy.

Leader: For the times we fail to offer hospitality to those in our world who suffer injustice, oppression, and poverty, we pray:

R: God, have mercy on us and your people

Leader: For the times we lack courage to address the causes of injustice, oppression and poverty, we pray to our God:

R: God, have mercy on us and on your people.

Leader: For the times we give in to despair and resignation when confronted with the injustice of our world, we pray to our God:

R: God, have mercy on us and on your people.

Leader: For the times we allow our fears to triumph over the call to solidarity, we pray to our God:

R: God, have mercy on us and on your people.

All: Merciful God, receive our petitions. Heal the brokenness in our hearts and in our world caused by injustice, indifference, selfishness and fear. Open our hearts to hear the cries of your suffering people. Support us as we seek to respond in solidarity and with hospitality. Amen.

Suggested Scripture Readings:

Leviticus 19: 33-34.

A theme of hospitality.

“When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God”.

Psalm 23

1. The Lord is our shepherd, nothing shall we lack
He will let us see our country of peace and justice
And he will lead us to it.

2. He will give us new courage and strength to overcome all temptations,
And He will lead us in the way of victory
Praise the Lord all the earth and sing Hallelujah to the Almighty.

3. When the storms of violence and destruction overtake us,
We will have no fear, for the Lord is with us,
He is our shepherd and he will protect us
With his mighty power and his love will be our shield.

4. He will lead us in our struggle against the enemy,
For we have trust in him.
We are welcomed as honoured guests, and
He will fill our cups with peace and justice.

5. We know that the Lord is with us,
His goodness and loving mercy will follow us all the way
His righteousness will be our home as long as we will live.

Luke 19: 1-10

Zacchaeus exchanges hospitality with Jesus.

V4-6 *“So Zacchaeus ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today. So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him”.*

Affirmation of Faith:

Leader: It is the will of God that no one should go away thirsty.

All: *It is the will of God that all who ask will be received.*

Leader: It is the will of God that none should be driven out of their homes and communities.

All: *It is the will of God that Christ's love be available to all the world.*

Leader: It is the will of God that we should be light to a waiting and broken world.

All: *It is the will of God that we love the world as Christ has loved us.*

