

Prayers

Prayer #1

All-embracing God, no one is a stranger to you and no one is ever far from your loving care. In your kindness, watch over refugees and exiles.

For those separated from their loved ones when they fled war and conflict, reunite them and give them protection.

Inspire us to make our churches places of refuge for those in search of safety and peace. Help us to show by our words and our actions the welcome you gave to the strangers you met.

We pray this,

In the name of our God who shares divinity with us,
In the name of our God who shares humanity with us,
In the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us,
We give our praise and thanks. Amen.

From the Presbyterian Church of Canada workshop
Making Connections: Staying Rooted in an Uprooted World.

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 receive.*

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.*

From liturgy: *Offering Hospitality to Refugees* www.crcna.org

Prayer #2

God, our creator and sustainer,
you loved us long before we knew ourselves to be lovable
and love us still.

Give us, we pray, a greater awareness of your love for all people,
and a confidence in the action of your grace in us
and in your church.

Grow in us a greater awareness of the oppression
and acts of greed that create refugees.

Give us the courage to welcome the stranger among us
and the wisdom to speak up on their behalf.

We praise you for your mysterious ways among us:
for your presence in the midst of human affairs
even in ways we do not understand.

By the power of your Spirit, may we grow in the truth that compels us to act justly;
giving expression to the compassion of your son Jesus.

We pray in Christ's name, Amen.

*Adapted from More than Words: Prayer and Ritual for Inclusive Communities by Janet Schaffran
and Pat Kozk. Oak Park, IL: Meyer-Stone Books, 1988, p110.*

Prayer #3

Lord Jesus, you swept away centuries of prejudice and legalism when you reached out and accepted people as they were.

Help us understand that there is not one of us who deserves your grace, yet you grant to us all, whether Muslims, Jews, Christians or non-Christians; whether believers or non-believers; rich or poor; black or white; status or non-status¹⁹; the love of God.

Strengthen us Lord, where we are weak, and give us courage to withstand the seduction of a society obsessed with wealth and power. Help us build bridges instead of erecting barriers. Help us live in peace and harmony with your creation where no one is a stranger anymore.

We pray this,

In the name of our God who shares divinity with us,
In the name of our God who shares humanity with us,
In the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us,
We give our praise and thanks. Amen.

From the Presbyterian Church of Canada workshop
Making Connections: Staying Rooted in an Uprooted World.

¹⁹ "Non-status Indians" commonly refers to people who identify themselves as Indians but who are not entitled to registration on the Indian Register pursuant to the *Indian Act*. Some of them may be members of a First Nation.
www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca

Prayer #4

Holy God, you are a God on the move.
You move in the world and in our lives.
You shape and direct your creation and us.
Your people have always been on the move.
Moses led your people out of slavery in Egypt.
Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt with Jesus to escape the murderous King Herod.
Today people continue to move.
War, poverty, oppression and injustice drive people from their homes and countries.
We pray that you will move with today's refugees and migrants.
Comfort and sustain them.
For all who serve those forced to move in our world, and for all who are on the move.

We pray this,

In the name of our God who shares divinity with us,
In the name of our God who shares humanity with us,
In the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us,
We give our praise and thanks. Amen.

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From liturgy: *Offering Hospitality to Refugees* www.crcna.org

Prayer #5

God of mercy and grace, we see genuine mercy that renews our spirits to right the wrongs in our world, to love the unloved, and to free the oppressed. Deliver us from cheap grace; grace without repentance, grace without the cross, grace without transformation.

By global comparisons, we are people of power and privilege. Too often we have left politics to politicians, preaching to preachers, and the affairs of other nations to fate. We commit ourselves this day to engage in your world, to hear the cries of your people, certain of the presence of your Holy Spirit leading us.

Loving God, help us understand that you are present with us in every encounter with others whose lives have been touched by death. Help us to listen for your voice God, beneath the human word spoken to us. May we be bearers of life and may we know your life-giving love in our lives.

We pray this,

In the name of our God who shares divinity with us,
In the name of our God who shares humanity with us,
In the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us,
We give our praise and thanks. Amen.

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Prayers of Intercession

Leader or reader:

Let us pray for refugees and displaced people throughout the world. Let us pray for those who have fled (from...) and who are (in...) or other parts of the world.

We especially pray for those known personally to us whom we now name before you (name aloud the people or community group).

We pray for them in their need for the basic necessities of life – shelter and food. Grant that they may have the skills and equipment to build shelters and to grow food.

We pray for ourselves that we can also be like Zacchaeus and welcome people into our homes.

From liturgy: *Offering Hospitality to Refugees* www.crcna.org

Prayer for Women Refugees

by Jane Deren

On the road, seeking safe shelter;
In makeshift tents, feeding children;
In resettlement centers, rebuilding community;
In strange neighborhoods, looking for a compassionate face:
Long lines of women refugees,
Thousands, millions, all searching for that grace called home.

Grant them healing and wholeness, God of the vulnerable.
As you cherished Mary, cherish these women.

Grant us eyes to see them and the will to reach out,
So they may know they are not forgotten
But are welcomed in the global community,
Sisters to us all.

Prayer #6

Almighty and merciful God,
whose Son became a refugee
and had no place to call his own;
look with mercy on those who today
are fleeing from danger,
homeless and hungry.

Bless those who work to bring them relief;
inspire generosity and compassion in all our hearts;
and guide the nations of the world toward that day
when all will rejoice in your Kingdom of justice
and of peace.

We pray this,

In the name of our God who shares divinity with us,
In the name of our God who shares humanity with us,
In the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us,
We give our praise and thanks. Amen.

From *A Prayer for Refugees*. The first two stanzas of the prayer are from
www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/prayers/

For the Courage to Do Justice

O Lord,
open our eyes that we may see the needs of refugees;
open our ears that we may hear people's cries for justice;
open our hearts that we may assist sojourners near and far.

Show us where love, hope and faith are needed.

Use us as ministers of your healing.

Let us not be afraid
to protect the weak because of the anger of the strong,
or to defend the poor because of the power of the rich.

Sustain us so that in these coming days
we may be able to do some work of peace for you.

We ask these things in your blessed name. You taught us to pray...

<http://gbgm-umc.org/umcor/refugees/rworship.stm>

Prayer for Refugees and Victims of War

Lord God,
no one is a stranger to you
and no one is ever far from your loving care.
In your kindness, watch over refugees and victims of war,
those separated from their loved ones,
young people who are lost,
and those who have left home or who have run away from
home.
Bring them back safely to the place where they long to be
and help us always to show your kindness
to strangers and to all in need
Grant this through Christ our Lord.

<http://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=1460>

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.
Loosen our tongues that we might speak your words of hope and love.
Open our hearts that we may be truly hospitable to the stranger in our midst.

From liturgy: *Offering Hospitality to Refugees* www.crcna.org

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:

Response: *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:

Response: *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:

Response: *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:

Response: *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.

From liturgy: *Offering Hospitality to Refugees* www.crcna.org

Don't Call Me a Stranger

Don't call me a stranger;
I need to feel at home;
Especially when loneliness cools my heart.

Don't call me a stranger;
The soil we stand on is the same;
But mine is not "the promised land."

Don't call me a stranger;
The colour of my passport is different;
But the colour of our blood is the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
The language I speak sounds different;
But the feelings it expresses are the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
I toil and struggle in your land;
And the sweat of our brows is the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
Borders, we created them;
And the separations that results is the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
I am just your friend;
But you do not know me yet.

Don't call me a stranger;
We cry for justice and peace in different ways;
But our God is the same.

From *Study: Making Room Good Samaritan*.
Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, Philippines, 1995 (abridged version).