

Peacemaking Sunday

18 September 2016

When I needed a neighbour: refugees and sanctuary



Peacemaking Sunday is held each year on the nearest Sunday to the United Nations International Day of Peace on 21 September. The Church of Scotland, Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church and United Reformed Church provide material each year for a service, including hymns, prayers, reflections and a visual meditation.

**When I needed a neighbour: refugees and sanctuary –
Peacemaking Sunday, 18 September 2016**

The theme for this year's resources is solidarity with refugees. On 19 September the United Nations holds a summit on refugees and migrants, and on 20 September President Obama will host a meeting of world leaders on the global refugee crisis. The focus of our prayers on Peacemaking Sunday will be for the success of these meetings and for our churches to continue to express concern for and act in solidarity with refugees.

www.jointpublicissues.org.uk
www.twitter.com/publicissues

enquiries@jointpublicissues.org.uk
020 7916 8632



The Church of Scotland The **Methodist** Church



Churches working together...

joint public issues team

...to live out the gospel of Christ in church and society

PSALMS, HYMNS AND SONGS

Psalm 61
 Psalm 77
 Psalm 91
 Psalm 84
 Psalm 113

First Line	Church Hymnary 4	Singing the Faith	Rejoice and Sing
Beauty for brokenness	CH4 259	StF 693	
For the healing of the nations (alternative tunes: Westminster Abbey, Cwm Rhondda)	CH4 706	StF 696	R&S 620
God weeps	CH4 168	StF 700	
Heaven shall not wait	CH4 362	StF 701	
Here to the house of God we come (alt. tunes: Abingdon, Melita)	CH4 195		
I the Lord of Sea and Sky	CH4 251	StF 663	
In Christ there is no East nor West	CH4 624	StF 685	R&S 647
Inspired by love and anger	CH4 253		
Longing for light, we wait in darkness	CH4 543	StF 706	
Pray for a world	CH4 265	StF 527	
Sent by the Lord am I	CH4 250	StF 239	
The Love of God is Broad like Beach and Meadow			R&S 108
We lay our broken world	CH4 721	StF 718	
When I needed a neighbour were you there	CH4 544	StF 256	
When I receive the peace of Christ	CH4 566		
When the hungry	CH4 258		

READINGS

Genesis 16:1-11	Hagar flees from Sarai but finds refuge in the Lord's angel
Exodus 12:33-42	The Israelites flee from Egypt without any provisions
Joshua 20:1-8	The Lord appoints cities of refuge
Ruth 1:1-5	Famine at home causes Elimelech's family to flee to Moab
Matthew 2:13-18	Joseph, Mary and Jesus flee from Herod to Egypt
Matthew 11:28-30	Jesus invites us to find refuge in Him
Matthew 25: 37-41	Just as you did it to the least of these, you did it for me
Luke 10: 25-37	The parable of the Good Samaritan

PRAYERS

A Call to Worship

Leader: In the name of the one
 who was ignored by many
 and betrayed by his friends,
 we welcome you.

**All: Here we may pause in our travels
 safe from the darkness**

Leader: By the power of the one

who lived in weakness
and had no place to rest,
we open our home.

**All: Here we may rest from our troubles
and sooth our wounds.**

Leader: Through the love of the one
who cared for all who came
and yet was rejected by his own people,
we accept you as you are

**All: Here we may lay down our defences
and be ourself, as we worship together.**

A prayer for our world

Almighty God, inspire the leaders of the nations of the world and those with authority with love and wisdom, and open our hearts and hands to welcome the stranger, love our enemies and to do to others what we want them to do to us.

May your Holy Spirit reign in the hearts of those who have the power to end strife and conflict and may your presence be with those who seek to serve those in desperate need. We ask you to bless the international summits taking place in New York on Monday 19 and Tuesday 20 September.

Be in the conversation and the conferencing and in all things remind the mighty and powerful rulers of the desperate situation facing some of the most vulnerable and marginalised people on earth.

We pray especially for the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the President of the United States Barak Obama as they seek to work for diplomacy, peace and the common good of all humankind.

In the name of Christ, who declared "Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be known as children of God", Amen.

Universal Prayer for Peace

Lead me from death to Life,
from falsehood to Truth.
Lead me from despair to Hope,
from fear to Trust.
Lead me from hate to Love,
from war to Peace.
Let Peace fill our heart, our world, our universe.
Peace, peace, peace.

A prayer from Christian Aid

Lord of the journey,
We ask for your protection on all who have fled their homes.
Give them strength on their journeys and grant that they may

find places of compassion at which to rest.
Ease their fear as they throw in their lot with strangers
And keep alive their vision of finding a secure and welcoming home.
Amen.

A Collect from the Church of England

Heavenly Father, you are the source of all goodness, generosity and love. We thank you for opening the hearts of many to those who are fleeing for their lives. Help us now to open our arms in welcome, and reach out our hands in support. That the desperate may find new hope, and lives torn apart be restored. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ Your Son, Our Lord, who fled persecution at His birth and at His last triumphed over death. Amen

REFLECTIONS

Excerpt from Pray Now 2010 Day 14 - Asylum

'Then the fugitive shall be taken into the city, and given a place, and shall remain with them.'

~Joshua 20:4b~

Thy will be done.

Fugitives from injustice deserve sanctuary, inviolable refuge from persecution or oppression.
Each asylum seeker given welcome and fair hearing.

And as those bloodied feet in ancient times fled along safety-seeking roads, so the flights continue in the desperation-driven refugee suffering the suffocating darkness of the ship's hold or bearing the battering in the hidden depths of the lorry's load.

And then arrival!

Bent figures – hungry, thirsty, bewildered, frightened and with nothing but a hope, a dream that things might be better here!

No room at the inn of the city – Christ, those words after such journeying – but we have a place round the back.

You may call it a stable but we call it a detention centre.

Surely new life can begin anywhere?

Isn't that what the Gospel's about?

O God, help us to make our city one of your cities of refuge and justice.

It's the least we can do in Jesus' name.

His cruciform arms embrace every asylum seeker and there is room for everyone.

Loving the sojourner.

"Love the sojourner...for you were sojourners..." Deuteronomy 10:19

What have we learned from the current refugee crisis, and indeed the other refugee crises that are to be found in the pages of history? What have we learned from the sojourner?

We need to learn what to call them: are they migrants, or refugees? A sojourner in the Bible can be a guest, or a pilgrim. The sojourner can stay for a short or a long time. A sojourner in the Bible might flee from famine, or persecution, or be a victim of war, or economic injustice. A sojourner might be escaping grief, or have been carried off into captivity. What we learn from the sojourner is one size will not fit all.

Deuteronomy challenges us to love the sojourners, for we too were once in their place. In our transient time we have all been on the move, and will continue to be in transit. We too need shelter, comfort, nourishment and love. Today's headline sojourners are, in fact, brothers and sisters in the human family. God calls us to love sojourners because in each one God's image is found. To love the sojourner is to love God and to love ourselves.

There are a number of practical things we can do, in addition to our continued prayer and concern for the world. You might like to give time as a volunteer or money to support relief work. The Church of Scotland have prepared resources along the theme of A Place at the Table, to encourage people to remember Syria and to contribute what they are able to support the work carried out by the Church in Syria and Lebanon to help refugees. You might also wish to consider writing to your MP, MSP, AM or local councillor to encourage them to use their influence to do more to help the whole of our society show love to the sojourner.

*Who will help the refugees
To cease their endless walking,
While the ones who claim to care
Continue endless talking?*

Words John L. Bell, © WGRG, c/o Iona Community, Glasgow.

Refugees and the Bible

Paula Gooder of the Bible Society in England has produced four short video introductions to the Bible and Refugees, along with accompanying study guides for small groups. See <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/articles-about-the-bible/what-does-the-bible-say-about-refugees/>

St Andrew and sanctuary

Andrew was a fisherman.

He would have known his way around a boat.

He'd have had to cope with stormy weather and treacherous water.

More than 22,000 migrants have drowned in the Mediterranean Sea since the year 2000.

But there are search and rescue missions and some folk welcome people as they arrive on the beaches.

There are those who bury the dead with dignity.

We can offer them our solidarity and support.

Andrew had a brother, Simon Peter.

And we know that they were close.

The brothers are mentioned in the Gospels as the earliest followers of Jesus – and that he would make them fishers of men.

For many refugees, families are separated in the chaos of fleeing and during the difficult journey to a place of sanctuary.

Family reunion is often like finding a needle in a haystack – there are now more than 4.8 million Syrian refugees registered by the United Nations.

But there are organisations like the Red Cross which reunite family members.

We can celebrate with them the joy bringing loved ones back together.

Andrew's relics were brought to Scotland (according to the legend).

As asylum seekers and refugees come to Scotland and the rest of Britain, what will we do to make them welcome?

BLESSING

A Celtic rune of hospitality

We saw a stranger yesterday.

We put food in the eating place,
Drink in the drinking place,
Music in the listening place.

And in the sacred name of the triune God
He blessed us and our house,
Our cattle and our dear ones.

As the lark says in her song:
Often, often, often goes Christ in the stranger's guise.

This year's Peacemaking Sunday resources have been compiled and prepared by David Bradwell, Co-ordinator of Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees www.sfar.org.uk