## World Refugee Day Prayer Service

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*For more information on World Refugee Day* (*June 20*)*, visit the United Nations High Commission for Refugee’s website:* [*www.unhcr.ca*](http://www.unhcr.ca)*.*

### Words of Welcome

(*Use words of welcome traditional for your community.*)

### Call to Worship

In times of wandering

**You guide us.**

In times of drought

**You feed us.**

In times of weakness

**You strengthen us.**

In times of fearfulness

**You comfort us.**

For all the ways you care for us

**We will forever give you thanks and praise.**

### Opening Hymn

“Crashing Waters at Creation” (*Voices United* (VU) 449)

“As those of Old Their First-fruits Brought” (VU 518)

“When You Bless Our Homes and Families” (VU 556)

“Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah” (VU 651)

### Children’s Time

Have children of similar ages to those of the poets, practice, illustrate, and/or recite one of the poems found in *A Book of Poems: Expressions from our Youth* (found at www.unhcr.ca/documents/poetry\_book.pdf).

For other age appropriate educational ideas see: [www.unhcr.ca/teachers/catalog.htm](http://www.unhcr.ca/teachers/catalog.htm)

### Reflecting Together

As you prepare to commemorate World Refugee Day, reflect on what we can learn from the struggles of the Israelites in the wilderness. How was God’s hospitality witnessed? How were the struggles of the peoples named?

Recount the Exodus story with the congregation, celebrating how God worked with and through the resilient Israelites. If possible, use a dramatic or narrative reading of the scripture, or have people act it out. You may wish to reflect on these texts or have members in your congregation who have experience with refugees share brief reflections on the themes mentioned. Consider separating the readings and reflections with a sung response.

**Scripture** Exodus 3:1–12

**Reflection** The Call to Action

Moses, a refugee, returns to Egypt to help lead the Israelites to freedom, guided by his relationship with God and supported by family.

*Sung Response: “If Our God Had Simply Saved Us”* (*VU 131*) *v. 1*

**Scripture** Exodus 6:1–9

**Reflection** Finding Courage

At first, the Israelites are unable to hear God’s message because of fear and crushed spirits. But throughout the Exodus text we are reminded of the feelings of anticipation, fear, and regret associated with fleeing a homestead (Exodus 16:3, 17:3). We bear witness to the courage, faith, fellowship, and trust needed to survive years in the unknown (Exodus 14:13).

*Sung Response: “If Our God Had Simply Saved Us”* (*VU 131*) *v. 4*

**Scripture** Exodus 13:21–22

**Reflection**  Extending Hospitality

In the story of Exodus we are reminded of the grace of God’s hospitality (Exodus 15:22–25, 16:35, 17:1–7) and guidance. We humbly accept God’s radical and gracious welcome when we receive and extend God’s hospitality to others.

*Sung Response: “If Our God Had Simply Saved Us”* (*VU 131*) *v. 15*

### Offering

**Praying Together**

(*During the pastoral prayers add the names of specific communities, countries, and regions that your congregation has either worked with, has connections to, has supported, or plans to support in the future.*)

**Scripture** Genesis 32:22–31

(*Jacob intimately and tenaciously wrestles with Holy Mystery and is transformed by the result*.)

**Sung Refrain**

**Wait for the Lord, God’s day is near.**

**Wait for the Lord. Be strong, take heart!**

or

**Scripture** Luke 11:1–4

(*In Jesus’ prayer we are taught to pray for God’s will simply, trusting that God will hear our prayers.)*

**Sung Refrain**

**Oh Lord, hear my prayer,**

**Oh Lord, hear my prayer.**

**When I call, answer me.**

**Oh Lord, hear my prayer,**

**Oh Lord, hear my prayer.**

**Come and listen to me.**

### Prayers of the People

We pray for the countries and regions that have hosted refugees. Knowing that refugee camps can be overcrowded, we pray for the continued safety of the camps and offer our thanks to those who work toward providing the basics of shelter, food, health care, and education.

Gracious and loving God,

**Hear our prayers.**

(*Candle is lit at first station*.)

We pray for refugees who have held onto hope while facing death. And we pray for the millions of refuges around the world who have fled their homes in search of basic human needs. We give thanks for their strong faith and pray that they will find the security and stability we all seek.

Gracious and loving God,

**come, hear our prayers.**

(*Candle is lit at second station*.)

**Sung Response** (MV 19)

**Maranatha, maranatha, come,**

**Lord Jesus, come.**

**Maranatha, maranatha, come,**

**Lord Jesus, come.**

We pray for the Internally Displaced People of Syria and all of the civilians that feel trapped in a war-torn country. We especially pray for the vulnerable among them.

Gracious and loving God,

**come, hear our prayers.**

(*Candle is lit at third station*.)

We pray that all sides who are actively involved in fighting can find paths that lead to a peaceable solution. May their hearts be opened to the suffering of those they fight against.

Gracious and loving God,

**come, hear our prayers.**

(*Candle is lit at fourth station*.)

**Sung Response** (MV 19)

**Maranatha, maranatha, come,**

**Lord Jesus, come.**

**Maranatha, maranatha, come,**

**Lord Jesus, come.**

We pray for the countless humanitarian workers who provide shelter, care, medical aid, and support to those affected by this long war. We give thanks for the work of our partners and the work of local churches that continue to support human rights for everyone through their various contributions.

Gracious and loving God,

**come, hear our prayers.**

(*Candle is lit at fifth station*.)

**Sung Response** (MV 19)

**Maranatha, maranatha, come,**

**Lord Jesus, come.**

**Maranatha, maranatha, come,**

**Lord Jesus, come.**

### Closing Hymn

“Bless Now, O God, the Journey” (VU 633)

“To Abraham and Sarah” (VU 634)

### Blessing

God bless us as we journey:

**through indifference in search of action**

**through war in search of peace**

**through oppression in search of freedom**

**through hate in search of acceptance**

**through life in search of you.**

**God bless us as we journey.**

### Invitation to prayer

(*Invite people to journey through prayer stations set up around the room and leave silently when ready.*)

***Suggested Prayer Stations***

***1. Blessed are they who mourn***

*After reflecting on Matthew 5:4, light a candle and offer a prayer for the people in your life in need of God’s comfort and shelter.*

***2. Prayers around the world***

*Using map pins identify a place on the map and write a prayer for that specific region with the cue cards provided.*

***3. Blessed are the peace keepers***

*After reflecting on Matthew 5:9, write a poem, draw a picture, or offer a prayer inside of the letters spelling PEACE, posted on the wall.*

***4. The Lord’s Prayer***

*Read through the various interpretations of the Lord’s Prayer and if you wish, write your own.*

***5. We give our thanks***

*Add your prayers of thanksgiving to the gratitude wall.*