

London Churches Refugee Fund

Charity Number
1121108

Lenten reflections and prayers for refugees and asylum seekers



The London Churches Refugee Hardship Fund offers these prayers and reflections for all five Sundays in Lent, inviting you to use them for church services, fellowship and Lent house groups or personal prayers and devotions.

They may be copied and used freely for non commercial purposes and on condition that you include an attribution to LCRF. We invite you to make a donation to the work of the charity, which you can do by visiting www.help4refugees.co.uk/donate or using the donation form on the back page.

How to use this resource

Each of the five parts relates to the lectionary readings for the five Sundays in Lent, and reflects the desperate situation of destitute refugees & asylum seekers in London.

As a part of your Lenten journey, you could use this material in any of the following ways or more, whether on Sundays or at other times:

Meditative Reading at the start of a Service – *perhaps lighting a candle*

Sermons

Prayers of intercession

News-sheets or other hand-outs

Ash Wednesday or Good Friday Reflections

Discussion groups

Personal prayer and devotions

***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

Leviticus 19 v 33,34

The London Churches Refugee Hardship Fund makes small grants to front-line church & community projects across London. The grants are mainly used to provide Travelcards, phonecards, hygiene and baby packs or other essentials to destitute refugees and asylum seekers. You can read more about our work, and how you can support it, at www.help4refugees.co.uk

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Sunday 10th March

Deuteronomy 26: 1-11. Luke 4: 1-13

'Alien'

How many generations since we came to London?

First generation, lots of us.

Second or third, perhaps, for some.

Only a few and born and bred here from generation to generation.

Aliens all, descendants of *a wandering Aramean*.

Thank you, God, for this city, *flowing with milk and honey*.

Thank you for protecting us, and those who came before, in the hard, unwelcoming times.

Thank you for the security and prosperity we enjoy.

All yours!

We offer back to you the best of what has come to us to share with those who are alien among us, now, as we were among others, before.

As we work to turn a hostile environment into a welcoming one may we encounter Jesus, who came among us as a stranger and faced hunger, thirst and temptation in the wilderness; who was homeless, rejected and abandoned so that we need no longer be aliens.

May we indeed be no longer aliens to God or to each other, but friends celebrating together, seeing in each other the face of Christ.



Sunday 17th March

**Genesis 15: 1-12,
Philippians 3:20, Luke 9:33**

Where is home for me?

Where is my home, really?

Is it in this place that you have brought me to, God?

Is it in the place my family came from, that I have left behind?

Is it on the mountaintop, in the dwellings Peter wanted to build?

Is it with you, in the church, in Heaven,

where St Paul says my citizenship is?

When I feel secure in my sense of belonging, God,

turn my heart to my fellow Londoners

who are homeless, destitute, sofa surfing or

sleeping on the night buses,

cut off from the land of their birth,

denied citizenship here,

yet your children, with a home in your heart.

And let there be a place for them in mine.

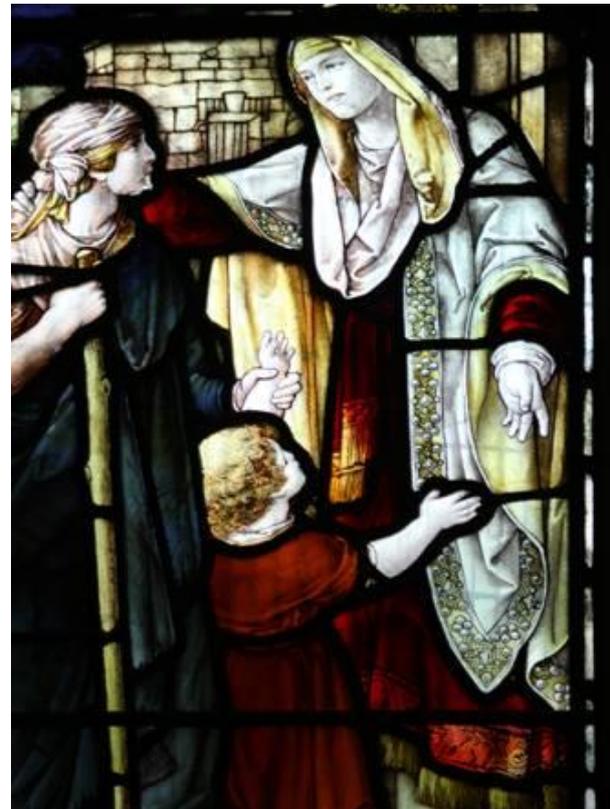
Open my purse, to provide.

Open my home, to welcome a stranger.

Open my mind to search for positive solutions to
destitution.

Open my church to be a place of welcome and
warmth

until you gather us all together in your eternal home.



Sunday 24th March

Isaiah 55: 1-9, 1 Corinthians 10: 1-13

Luke 13: 1-9

Don't blame the victim!

Don't blame the activists for the punishment they suffered, says Jesus.

Don't blame the victims of a terrible accident.

Look to yourself.

So, when I am tempted to dismiss the plight
of people who came to this city
fleeing violent regimes abroad
or escaping threats to their livelihood,
help me to remember that it could be me



and to repent
of my complicity in a world order
where these things are possible,
of my compliance with my nation's
policy
of turning its back on people in
need,
of my own failure to bear fruit for
your kingdom.

May I see things with your eyes,
abandon my self-centred ways and judgmental thoughts,
know how close we all are to falling into chaos,
and reach out for your mercy
and for your abundance
which is there for all of us to share.

It isn't all about me!

When I am in the position of the Prodigal Son's elder brother, God;
when I have been well behaved and hard working and haven't received much
reward or recognition;
when others less worthy than I am are made much of;

if I am tempted to be jealous
in those rare times when the refugees among us
are believed and received and helped;
if I listen to the voices telling me there's no room, no money,
that refugees are dangerous;

then come out to me, plead with me to be as generous as you are,
remind me that you provide for my needs carefully,
daily and hourly,
and help me to see that we are family,
that my siblings' need is mine,
that their restoration is cause for
celebration for me, too;

and teach me to be content with a role
that is not heroic,
that doesn't put me in the limelight,
that is not all about me

but that quietly reflects your own yearning love for us all,
your longing for our stories to have good endings,
your joy in our homecomings.



Comfort

A woman walks down the stairs at the Advice Centre, beaming.

I've got my Leave to Remain!

How our hearts long for recognition

of our worth, our genuine needs; how we long for acceptance.

How the Israelites who went into exile

longed to return to the Land,

for water in the desert,

for ordinary relaxation and happiness.

How Mary warmed Jesus' heart in the week of his suffering

by her heartfelt gesture of devotion.

In this week of your suffering, God,
make us channels of comfort for people in
our city who are

- rejected by our immigration system
- excluded from work, study, community
- refused a roof over their heads
- left to deal with trauma without support.

May we help to turn their tears into joy
and to fill their mouths with laughter,
so that, as we experience renewal this
coming Eastertide,
they too may experience restoration and
renewal in their lives.



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- I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

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See our full privacy notice at www.help4refugees.co.uk/privacy-notice

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Please return the whole of this form, once completed, to :

The Treasurer, London Churches Refugee Fund, 144 Ladywell Road, London SE13 7HU

STANDING ORDER MANDATE

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Those donating £10 per month or more will be added to the list of "Foundation Donors"

To the Manager [Name and address of your Bank:]

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Please pay the sum of £..... on (or as near to) theday of each month with immediate effect and until further notice to the credit of: **London Churches Refugee Fund, Account no: 65231704; Sort Code 08-92-99; Co-operative Bank, PO Box 250, Southway, Skelmersdale, WN8 6WT** and debit the following account accordingly:

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