

## Materials for Refugee Week worship, from London Churches Refugee Fund

London  
Churches  
Refugee Fund

Charity Number  
1121108

*Refugee Week 2016 runs from 20<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> June, although of course it is possible to hold a refugee-themed service at any time of the year. The materials below are offered for anyone to use; if you do so, please consider making a donation to the work of the Fund.*

*More details about us and how to donate can be found at [www.help4refugees.co.uk](http://www.help4refugees.co.uk).*

### A Prayer:

Our Father in Heaven

Grant safe passage to all who are fleeing war, famine, violence, and fear;

Grant them a safe haven and loving practical assistance.

Help us to welcome, include, and embrace as our neighbours those who are seeking sanctuary -

And may there be no “us and them” – just “we all”

as together we see, share and celebrate the gifts that God has given us.

In Jesus name

Amen

*Chris Brice, Chair of LCRF*

### Case studies:

*True case studies from two of the agencies we support. They could be used at any point in the service but may fit best before the gospel reading or between that and the reflection on it.*

**D** is 21 and had exhausted his rights to appeal after having had poor legal representation during his application for asylum. After his local authority disputed his age, he had become street homeless when he was referred to the Children’s Society and had been beaten up the week before while sleeping in a park. The Children’s Society sought emergency accommodation from numerous charities but none had a bed for more than two months. During this time the Society provided D with a bus pass so that he could sleep more safely than on the streets. This also enabled him to travel to food banks as well as solicitor’s appointments, an essential part of the process of addressing the underlying cause of his destitution. The Society then obtained emergency accommodation for him, additional mental health support to address his flashbacks to witnessing his mother being killed, and a new solicitor to assist him to submit a fresh application to the Home Office, with significant fresh evidence. D then became eligible for statutory housing by NASS.

**M**, a young Kurdish woman from Turkey, is a torture survivor with mental health problems. She is also a single parent with a son who has recently started school. Her husband left her last year, leaving her with no immigration status in this country. She receives family therapy from the Helen Bamber Foundation and it took some time for her solicitor to gather the necessary evidence, including a medico-legal report, to make a fresh claim on her behalf. During this period she had no income at all and the Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants provided her with

financial assistance for emergency food and travel, as well as essential items for her son. After making a fresh claim she has now been provided with asylum support, including accommodation.

*Both agencies featured in these studies received small grants from LCRF and used these funds to support the individuals whose cases are summarised above.*

## **Gospel Reading: Luke 4: 14-21**

### **Reflection on the reading**

#### **This word 'poor'.....**

There's a rather funny-sounding Greek word used over and over again in the gospels and generally translated 'poor'. The word is ptochos, and it means reduced to beggary, begging, asking alms/destitute of wealth, influence, position, honour. A word that describes very well those people living on our streets in London today whose applications for asylum have, for one reason or another, been refused and who are not allowed to work or claim benefits. They are living on the street, on the buses (if they can get a bus pass) or, if they are lucky, hutching up with someone from their own community who may be almost as poor themselves.

It's interesting that the very first thing Jesus says as he announces his ministry is:

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the **poor***

- that's the ptochos, those destitute, reduced to beggary. He goes on (after the people who hear this try to kill him and he escapes) to do just that; healing, feeding, teaching and empowering the poorest of the poor.

His followers in twenty first century London honour him by bringing good news to the destitute among us in the shape of food, Oyster top-up, phone cards, nappies and help in finding a way forward into a life where their gifts can be used and respected.

I saw that good news happening at Notre Dame Refugee Centre in Leicester Square. At 6.30am on the Monday before Christmas I accompanied to their door a young friend who needs expert advice on her right to stay here. We were sixth in the queue. I don't know how many of the others in the queue had slept in a bed that night. Yet all were seen by 5pm; all had eaten a good hot lunch; all had been treated with warmth and respect as they sat out their long day. There was much laughter - and, as it was Christmas, everyone got a goodie bag too.

Good news for the ptochos, the destitute. The work of Jesus. Be part of it.

*Maggie Hindley, LCRF Trustee*

#### **Suggested hymn:**

*God's Spirit is deep in my heart* (Words by Hubert Richards; tune *Go tell everyone*)

**Additional materials written in previous years can be found on our website at [www.help4refugees.co.uk/refugee-week](http://www.help4refugees.co.uk/refugee-week)**