

NEW World Refugee Day2023 Worship & Prayer Resources

CALLS TO WORSHIP

Call to Worship #1

Leader: Give thanks to the Lord, whose steadfast love endures forever.

People: We are strangers before you and sojourners like all our ancestors.

Leader: God is our rock and our refuge, a strong and mighty fortress.

People: We are strangers before you and sojourners like all our ancestors.

Leader: Beloved, people of light, come; the Lord is our hope.

People: God welcomes us all, whoever we are, wherever we are, however we are.

All: God welcomes us all.

Call to Worship #2

Leader: How lovely is the house of the Lord.

People: How beautiful to be gathered in the presence of God.

Leader: How lovely is the dwelling place of the Lord.

People: In this place, there are many rooms. Christ has prepared space for all.

Leader: God will keep our going out and our coming in from this time and forevermore.

People: Come, let us worship God.

Call to Worship #3

Leader: Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!

People: I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long.

Leader: Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,

People: who made heaven and earth, who executes justice for the oppressed;

Leader: The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord gives food to the hungry.

People: The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous.

Leader: The Lord watches over the strangers; the Lord upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked the Lord brings to ruin.

People: The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord!

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION & ASSURANCES OF PARDON

Prayer of Confession #1

God of Grace,
we confess that we are too concerned
with our own peace.
We seek the comfort of silence,
and ignore the cries of the oppressed.
We are inwardly focused,
missing your call to serve the world in justice and love.
Forgive us, O God.
Forgive us for the times we only recognized your image
in those who look, think, and act like us.
Forgive us for the times we've hoarded your blessings
and acted as if the poor, the hungry,
and the forcibly displaced have somehow
brought their reality upon themselves.
Equip us to fulfill your will for a world
in which we all know dignity
and all are treated with equity
as your beloved children.

Assurance of Pardon #1

Hear the Good News. God said "I am making everything new." Even now, God is creating a new heaven and new earth. God is making a home here, among God's people – to live here, to call us God's own. Each of us, collectively and individually, is washed clean in God's spring of living water, refreshed and ready to live for God and God's children, here and everywhere.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer of Confession #2

Grace-filled God,
we confess that we pursue our own needs,
neglecting the needs of others.
We pursue our own desires,
while slowly destroying the gifts of your creation.
We confess that we cling to
narratives of artificial scarcity.
We deflect the call to ministry,
ignoring the cries of those in need.
We are drawn to proclaim the gospel,
yet live it out only at our convenience.

You call us to open our hearts
to the world in all its complexity,
yet we refuse to see nuance,
preferring black and white categories
and simple explanations.
We close doors, hearts, and churches to those
whom we judge as too difficult and strange.
Have mercy on us, O God.
Open our eyes to the truth of the gospel
that, whatever the time or wherever we are,
we may fully embody your love and justice for all the world.

Assurance of Pardon #2

Hear the Good News.
Whoever we are, wherever we are, however we are,
we belong to God.
Through Jesus Christ, God cleanses us
from our selfishness and individualism,
leading us to wholeness and community.
People of God, we are forgiven.
Thanks be to God.

Prayer of Confession #3

God of history,
we lament the ways in which the United States
has historically oppressed its global neighbors.
From colonization to occupation,
we recognize its shared responsibility
for sowing political and economic turmoil around the world,
uprooting people from their homes, cultures, and traditions.
We confess it is more comfortable
to forget our country's violent history
and turn away from the communities we've harmed.
Awaken us, O Lord.

God who remembers,
we lament that our memory of crises
lasts as long as the news cycle.
We confess our disproportionate support and care
to areas of the world that receive more media attention.
From Syria to Haiti,
Cameroon to Myanmar,

and Venezuela to Sudan,
stir us to pay attention to all
in need of prayer, support, and care.
Afflict us, O Lord.

God of the displaced,
we lament that we betray our global neighbors
by worshiping the idols of wealth,
political interest, and national security.
We confess our addiction to convenience,
made possible by exploitative structures
that treat people as commodities.
Move us to confront the ways
we are complicit in systems
that uproot people from their homes.
Embolden us, O Lord.

God of deep roots,
we lament the difficulties refugees face
upon arriving in the United States.
Help us remember that “welcoming the stranger”
is but the first step in empowering new Americans
to sing the song of their heart in a foreign land.
Give us wisdom to discern
when to use our power and privilege,
and when to lay it down.
Open us to listen well to the stories of our neighbors.
Solidify our commitment to abundant life for all.
Forgive us when we fail, O Lord.

Assurance of Pardon #3

In the name of the One who gathers the lost,
comforts the brokenhearted,
and raises the dead,
I proclaim to you that you are forgiven.
Believe the good news of the Gospel:
In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, healed, and made whole.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Prayers of the People #1

God of movement,

We remember that the stories of our tradition are stories of wandering, of flight, or forced migration. Our Holy Scriptures tell us of the sojourns of the people of God – of slavery and persecution, of wandering in the wilderness, of exile and loss.

May we who are the Body of Christ, the Church, embrace and welcome all who seek shelter from any danger. We thank you that love overcomes fear, that in your compassion we learn to walk with those who suffer, that when we give of ourselves we receive far more, and that when we receive those who stand knocking at our doors, we receive Christ the Beloved One.

We pray all these things in the name of Jesus Christ, the wandering migrant. **Amen.**

Prayers of the People #2

God in our midst,

You arrive in our lives every day, coming to us again and again and again. You invite us to prepare the way for your arrival, not only in our hearts, but also in our neighborhoods and communities. The work of *preparing the way* calls us to dismantle systems that promote exclusion and harm rather than welcome and belonging. Stir us to action, removing the barriers that prevent your arrival.

We pray especially for those who are actively seeking refuge and asylum in the United States. We recognize that as a country we have failed to prepare a way for your children to find safety and rest among us. Move us to solidarity, recognizing that in standing with those seeking asylum, we are standing with you.

In Christ the Migrant's name we pray. **Amen.**

Prayers of the People #3

Loving and Gracious God,
remember the whole human family,
especially those who hunger for food or justice,
those who have lost homes,
or been denied human dignity.
So many are unknown to us,
yet each known to you

and each a child of your love.

Remember your people
in every part of the world,
redeemed by Christ,
dedicated to service,
called to love.
Remember your Church in this place,
set in this community,
to light the way to your grace and truth.

Remember those who are
in the depths of sorrow,
those who have difficult choices to make,
who are concerned for loved ones near and far.
May they know that nothing is able
to separate them from your love in Christ Jesus.

We pray for the peace of the world.
Move among us by your Spirit,
break down barriers
of fear, suspicion, and hatred.
Heal the human family of its divisions
and unite it in the bonds of justice and peace.

We pray for those who suffer.
Surround them with your love,
support them with your strength,
console them with your comfort,
and give them hope and courage
beyond themselves.

In all these things for which we pray,
give us the will to seek to bring them about.
Keep us true to the gospel
and responsive to the gifts and needs of all.
Make known your healing power in Jesus Christ,
by the witness of our faith, our worship, and our life. **Amen.**

Prayers were written by the Rev. Emily Wilkes, Mission Specialist for Domestic Refugee Ministries, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance