



Canadian Lutheran World Relief

CLWR World Refugee Day Congregational Resources for Service of the Word and Service with Holy Communion



As people continue to flee the violence in Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is supporting refugees arriving in Burundi. (LWF photo/Diogène Rukundo)

Suggestions for worship

Consider using visual images of refugees, humanitarian workers and refugee camps as powerful if unsettling and uncomfortable reminders of the reality of many, many people in this world. You can view collections of UN photos of migrants, refugees and internally displaced people [here](#) or the UNHCR's collection of top refugee photos from 2024 [here](#).

A striking visual illustration of the flight into Egypt is "La Sagrada Familia" by Kelly Latimore, a member of the Common Friars, a monastic order in the Episcopal Church. Latimore pictures the Holy Family as a present-day immigrant family, walking by moonlight, as they seek refuge. The image and commentary can be found [here](#).

Have someone report on the work of CWLR in refugee sponsorship using information found on the Canadian Lutheran World Relief [website](#).

Invite refugees who have been resettled in the community via CLWR and a church-sponsored Refugee Sponsorship Committee to tell their story. Or invite a person who has served on a Refugee Sponsorship Committee to talk about what they have experienced in serving their neighbours in this way.

Hymn suggestions

Hymns in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and *With One Voice* related to **Community in Christ, Justice and Peace, Time after Epiphany, Vocation and Ministry, Lament**

God welcomes all	ACS 978
Let us enter in	ACS 985
Go to the world	ACS 991
Wind and Cold Roar	ACS 1010
What is the world like	ACS 1047
For the troubles and sufferings of the world	ACS 1051
When our world is rent by violence	ACS 1052
Build a longer table	ACS 1062
God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind	ELW #401
The Lord Now Sends Us Forth	ELW #538
To Be Your Presence	ELW #546
The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve	ELW #551; WOV #723
Here I Am, Lord	OV #752
All Are Welcome	ELW #641
In Christ There Is No East or West	ELW #650
Bring Peace to Earth Again	ELW #700
Once We Sang and Danced	ELW #701
When Pain of the World Surrounds Us	LW #706
Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love	ELW #708; WOV #765
Let Streams of Living Justice	ELW #710
Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service	ELW#712
O God of Every Nation	ELW #713
Christ, be Our Light	ELW #715
Let Justice Flow like Streams	ELW #717; WOV #763
We Are Called	ELW #720
When the Poor Ones	ELW #725
Light Dawns on a Weary World	ELW #726
This Is My Song	ELW #887

Prayer options for the day

Prayer — Called to love

God our creator, you call your people to love as you love without partiality, showing hospitality to the stranger, doing justice, speaking for those whose voices are not being heard and defending the rights of the poor and marginalized. We give thanks for the work of Canadian Lutheran World Relief on our behalf. Help us to show your love in all that we do and say. May we see the face of your Son in the faces of all whom we are called to love and serve, through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. Amen

Prayer — Called to act

Jesus our brother, you who were once a refugee, show your mercy on all individuals who are forced to flee their homes due to conflict, persecution, climate degradation or violence. Motivate us to provide welcome, advocate for their rights and work for peace and justice in the world. Bless the work of Canadian World Relief and help us to be generous supporters of this important ministry. We pray this in your most holy name. Amen.

Prayer from Rev. Dr. Larry Kochendorfer

God of the widows and orphans, the immigrants and refugees, give strength to those who today are fleeing their homes and lands, resilience to those displaced and living in refugee camps, peace to those seeking healing for trauma, and courage to the countless humanitarian workers who provide shelter, care, medical aid and support. Open our hearts and minds to see what you see, to love as you love and to give as you have given so that your promised justice would become reality in our world. All these things we pray in your holy name. Amen.



As people continue to flee the violence in Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is supporting refugees arriving in Burundi. (LWF photo/Diogène Rukundo)

Scripture suggestions

Genesis 12:10

Abram is an alien in Egypt

Genesis 18:1-8

Abraham's hospitality to three strangers

Exodus 22:21-24

God is the protector of the alien, widow and orphan

Exodus 23:9

Justice for resident aliens

Deuteronomy 10:17-19

Love the orphan, widow and stranger impartially as God loves

Isaiah 58:6-11

God desires justice for the hungry and oppressed

Matthew 2:13-15

Mary, Joseph and Jesus flee to safety

Matthew 22:34-40

The two great commandments

**(see also Luke 10:25-28 [29-37];
Mark 12:28-34)**

Matthew 25:31-40

Jesus' judgment is grounded in justice

Luke 4:16-21

Jesus reads from the prophet Isaiah

Acts 18:1-3

Paul stays with refugees in Corinth from Italy

Acts 27:39-28:2

Paul and shipmates receive kindness in Malta

Romans 13:8-10

Love fulfills the commandments

Hebrew 13:1-3

Admonishment to love

James 2:8-13

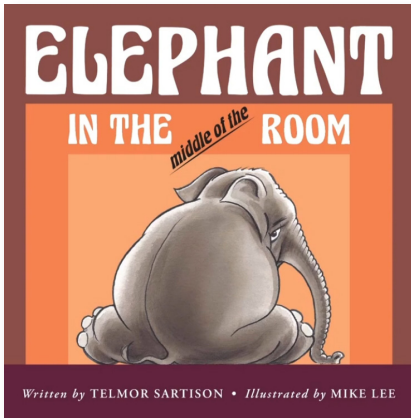
Caution against showing partiality



The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is providing emergency support to refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo as they arrive in Burundi. (LWF photo/Diogène Rukundo).

Children's time:

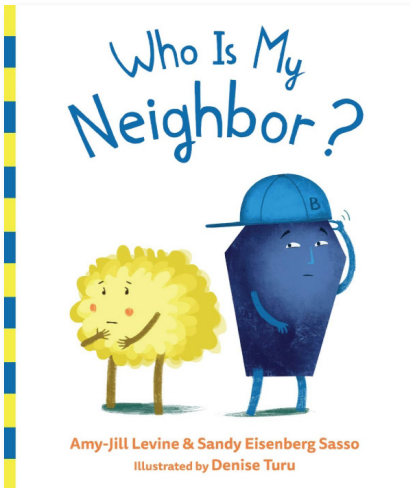
Suggestions for resources appropriate for World Refugee Day



Elephant in the Middle of the Room

A reading by Bishop Telmor Sartison

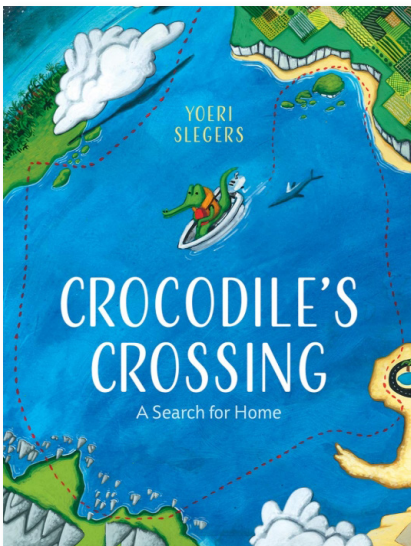
Elephant walks into this place of anger and upset, finds the only space available, right in the centre of the room, and sits there. At first his friends do not see him. They are so busy being upset, sitting as far away from one another as possible. But you can't have an elephant in the room for very long without noticing that he or she is there. Watch the video, a CLWR production, on [YouTube](#).



Who is My Neighbour?

Written by Amy-Jill Levine and Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, illustrated by Denise Turu and published by Flyaway Books

In this retelling of Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan, we learn what happens when the various "blues" neglect another blue but a yellow comes along to help. The book poses the question: Just how *do* we see our neighbours and ourselves? Available at bookstores and online. There is also a [video reading of the book on YouTube](#).



Crocodile's Crossing: A Search for Home

Written and illustrated by Yoeri Slegers

Crocodile is tired, scared and hopeful as he searches for his new home. *Everything will be better where I'm going!* he thinks. *But where is that?* *Crocodile's Crossing: A Search for Home* introduces children to the complex topic of immigration. Featuring bright artwork packed with playful details, this thoughtful tale sensitively portrays the challenges faced by refugees and other newcomers. Available at bookstores and online. There is also a [video reading of the book on YouTube](#).

Petitions for the Prayers of Intercession

Leader: Let us pray for the world; all refugees seeking safety and peace; the work of Canadian Lutheran World Relief, resettlement teams and sponsoring communities; and our own needs, saying, God who executes justice and loves the stranger,

Congregation: Hear the prayers of your people.

Leader: Let us give thanks for God's steadfast love and mercy: (Pause)

You who have made all creation and called it good, receive our thanks and praise for your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who shows us in his living, dying and rising how to live and love as you have desired from the beginning.

God who executes justice and loves the stranger,

Congregation: Hear the prayers of your people.

Leader: Let us pray for the world and the harmony of all creation, (Pause)

You, who keeps faith with your creation forever, move us to recognize your benevolent care for all you have made and work to nurture and restore its goodness.

God who executes justice and loves the stranger,

Congregation: Hear the prayers of your people.

Leader: Let us pray for all refugees seeking safety and peace: (Pause)

How can we stand by when there are sisters and brothers who are:

- unaccompanied minors crossing borders
- caught in war and held captive in the fighting
- facing hatred and intolerance
- fleeing for their lives with many dying to reach safety
- not always having a say in which country they will be resettled
- waiting and waiting for the bureaucratic process to be completed
- viewed with suspicion
- strangers in strange lands
- here at the end of a long journey and starting new lives

Arkoum refugee camp, Chad, which hosts 51,000 refugees from Sudan and was established in May 2023.
(LWF photo/C. Kästner-Meyer)



Move us to follow your commands, O God, and welcome the stranger, care for those who have come with nothing but the clothes on their backs, heartaches and memories, and be neighbour to all your children.

God who executes justice and loves the stranger,

Congregation: Hear the prayers of your people.

Leader: Let us pray for Canadian Lutheran World Relief, resettlement teams, sponsoring communities of faith who go above and beyond the written contractual requirements to welcome and embrace refugees, and all who have given so generously to support this work: (Pause)

We give you thanks for CLWR and all who have participated in giving committed and unfaltering assistance to those seeking refuge in Canada. Move us to continue the work that has begun in loving service and to meet the ever-increasing needs of this world's people.

God who executes justice and loves the stranger,

Congregation: Hear the prayers of your people.

Leader: Let us pray for ourselves: (Pause)

Regard the needs of your people, gracious God, and be with the sick, comfort the grieving and accompany all who struggle in body, mind or spirit especially those whom we name before you today...Give us our daily bread and help us to do your will.

God who executes justice and loves the stranger,

Congregation: Hear the prayers of your people.

Leader: Let us give thanks for the lives of those who have died: (Pause)

Keep us in your loving grace now and when we join with them in the light of your eternal presence.

God who executes justice and loves the stranger,

Congregation: Hear the prayers of your people.

Leader: All these petitions we bring before you, asking that we may be faithful people who do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with you, through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord.

Congregation: Amen

For those congregations celebrating Holy Communion, you may wish to use the Thanksgiving at the Table, VIII, IX, X, ELW p. 67-69 or the following prepared for World Refugee Day:

Great thanksgiving

Pastor: In the beginning, God created the universe and everything in it, in great and steadfast love calling all that had been made "good."

Congregation: Yet the harmony of creation was marred by our disobedience.

Pastor: God did not give up on creation, in great and steadfast love forbearing anger and offering mercy.

Congregation: Yet we continued to seek our own ends and go our own ways, not listening to the words of the prophets calling us back to God's way.

Pastor: God did not give up on creation, in great and steadfast love sending Jesus to show us how to live in the merciful love with which God first loved us.

Congregation: Yet we refused to abide in this merciful love, condemning the One who came to a cruel death and ignominious end.

Pastor: God did not give up on creation, raising Jesus from the dead, in great and steadfast love mercifully offering us new and abundant life.

Congregation: Confronted with such persistent, merciful love, we throw ourselves on God's grace, acknowledging our inability to save ourselves from ourselves.

Pastor: We remember that in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Pastor: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes:

Congregation: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Pastor: Remembering all that you have done for us in the life, death, resurrection and ascension of your Son, we pray that your Holy Spirit would rouse and inspire us to work for justice and peace for all your people so that everyone may know the abundant life you desire for all humanity.

To you, gracious God, we give our praise and thanksgiving, through Christ our Lord, by the power of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Congregation: Amen

Blessing

Leader: Out of our faith, may we be warm-hearted and loving; Out of our abundance, may we be generous with those in need;

Out of our humanity, may we be bearers of justice and peace in our world.

And may God our Creator bless us with steadfast love and mercy, Christ Jesus show us how to love with compassion,

and the Holy Spirit work in us and accompany us always.

Congregation: Amen

Dismissal

Leader: Go out into the world now. Show no partiality. Love as we have been loved.

Congregation: Thanks be to God!

Additional resources:

The following are additional resources from various communities of faith. Please give credit to the writer or publisher as indicated when using their work.

Prayer of Saint Francis

[Franciscan and Other Common Prayers \(fspa.org\)](https://fspa.org)

The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, Anglican Church of Canada (Now, Alongside Hope): PWRDF and Canadian Foodgrains Bank, "*Welcoming the Stranger*"
[World-Refugee-Day-worship-resource.pdf \(pwrdf.org\)](https://pwrdf.org/World-Refugee-Day-worship-resource.pdf)

Prayer for Refugees by Rabbi Marla J. Feldman, Executive Director, Women of Reform Judaism

[Prayer for Refugees - Marla Feldman, USA | Worship Words](#)

United Church of Canada

[Prayer for Asylum-Seekers | The United Church of Canada \(united-church.ca\)](https://united-church.ca)

The Methodist Church (UK): Singing the Faith

[Readings and resources \(methodist.org.uk\)](https://methodist.org.uk)