



WORSHIP RESOURCES

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. Washington Office encourages congregations to consider setting aside a special Sunday to pray and advocate for migrants, particularly those who are seeking safe refuge in the U.S. The materials below are intended to provide a starting point for worship leaders and pastors as they plan their congregation's worship.

♥ Gathering	2
♥ Songs	2
♥ Prayers and litanies	2-3
♥ Offering	3
♥ Children's time	3
♥ Scripture texts	4
♥ Sermon ideas	4
♥ Song of response	5
♥ Benediction	5



GATHERING

- *Hymnal: A Worship Book* 661
- Call to Worship based on *Psalms* 146

Praise God with your whole being!
I will praise God as long as I live!

Don't trust the plans of humanity.
Only God's expansive love is eternal.

Praise God!
**We praise the creator,
the God of Jacob.
The one who straightens the bent,
who loves the hungry and poor.**

Praise God!
**We are here to praise our God,
who protects the immigrant,
who helps the orphan and widow.**

Praise God!
**Praise the creator whose love flows from
generation to generation until all is
as God dreams it can be.**

Praise God!

--Written by Tim Graves, posted on
liturgybits.com



SONGS

- *Sing the Journey* 8 "Somos pueblos que camina"
(We are people on a journey)
- *Hymnal: A Worship Book* 322 "For we are
strangers no more"
- *Hymnal: A Worship Book* 439 "I want Jesus to
walk with me"
- "I Will Exalt You" by Hillsong Worship



PRAYERS & LITANIES

- *Sing the Journey* 130
- *Sing the Journey* 139
- *Sing the Journey* 142
- *Hymnal: A Worship Book* 683
- *Hymnal: A Worship Book* 803
- **Prayer for migrants**

Dear Jesus,

Our journey through life is long and hard. We cannot make this trip alone; we must walk together on the journey.

You promised to send us a helper, your Spirit. Help us to see your Spirit in those you send to journey with us.

In the refugee family, seeking safety from violence,

Let us see your Spirit.

In the migrant worker, bringing food to our tables,

Let us see your Spirit.

In the asylum-seeker, seeking justice for himself and his family,

Let us see your Spirit.

In the unaccompanied child, traveling in a dangerous world,

Let us see your Spirit.

Teach us to recognize that as we walk with each other, You are present.

Teach us to welcome not only the strangers in our midst but the gifts they bring as well: the invitation to conversion, communion, and solidarity.

This is the help you have sent: we are not alone. We are together on the journey, and for this we give you thanks. Amen.

-- [Collected Prayers for Immigrants](#)

PRAYERS & LITANIES continued

- **Prayer of confession**

God, let us not only be grateful if tragedies have escaped us. Let us also be transformed by your grace to repent of ways we are implicated in unjust policies that lead to tragedies upon others. Offer protection to those seeking new life. Amen.

-- [Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries](#), "Lent 2019: Turning walls into welcome," Interfaith Immigration Coalition, Week 3



OFFERING

Consider designating a special offering for MCC's work to help [welcome newcomers](#) to the U.S.

Offering prayer:

- *Sing the Journey* 150
- *Hymnal: A Worship Book* 750



CHILDREN'S TIME

The leader may ask the children if they have ever moved. If so, allow them to share what the experience was like. Explain that sometimes families move because they want to do so. Other times they move because they have no other choice. Then, read a story such as *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale* by Duncan Tonatiuh or *Two White Rabbits* by Jairo Buitrago.

Or, if immigrants or refugees attend your congregation, you may want to invite them to share parts of their story in an interview format. You may want to ask questions such as: How old were you when you moved to the U.S.? Why did you come to the U.S.? What is your first memory of being in the U.S.? What are things that you enjoyed doing in your home country? Plan this out in advance to allow the people being interviewed to determine what they are comfortable sharing with the children and congregation.





SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Genesis 18:1-8; Psalm 91; Hebrews 13:1-3



SERMON IDEAS

All of us long for safety and refuge. Ultimately this is found only in God, who welcomes the strangers and gives them refuge. As we seek to become more Christlike, we too are called to create places of refuge and welcome for those who are in danger or need. Dina Nayeri [writes](#) of her own experience as a refugee in the United States: “It is the obligation of every person born in a safer room to open the door when someone in danger knocks.”

Hebrews 13:2 instructs Jesus’ followers to show hospitality to strangers. “The Greek word for hospitality is ‘philoxenos.’ It means love for the stranger and was recognized as a primary characteristic of the early followers of Christ. The mandate was, is, and remains clear: to live lives of inclusive hospitality, to recognize that Christ comes to us in the form of the stranger, and to be one with the prisoners, the persecuted, the undocumented, the refugee, the migrant, the immigrant, the stranger” ([The Bible as the Ultimate Immigration Handbook, p. 15](#)). Philoxenos—love for the stranger—is in stark contrast to another word with the same root, “xenos.” Xenophobia is fear of the stranger. As Christians, we are instructed to turn away from fearing the stranger and toward loving the stranger.

The reference in Hebrews to unknowingly entertaining angels may refer to the story in Genesis 18. Abraham, cited in Hebrews 11 as an example of faith, ran to three strangers who appeared and welcomed them into his household. As is customary in Middle East hospitality, he provided a generous meal to them.

Elsewhere in Genesis 18 we learn that it was the LORD who had appeared as a stranger.

Immigrants and refugees also enrich our communities in many ways. They revive struggling towns, fill worker shortages and open small businesses. It is not a zero-sum game. Asylum seekers don’t “win” safe refuge at a cost to the rest of us. We all win, building stronger and more prosperous communities together.

Additional resources and stories:

- [Trump gave states the power to ban refugees. Conservative Utah wants more of them](#)
- [The song remains: Hope in Honduran gang territory](#) (Mennonite World Conference)
- “Each step is a prayer,” [Mennonite World Conference Peace Sunday 2019 worship resources](#)
- [Out of the house of slavery: A Bible study on immigration](#)





SONG OF RESPONSE

- “Jesus, See the Traveler” by Sara Groves
- *Sing the Journey* 4 “You’ve got a place (at the welcome table)”
- *Sing the Journey* 64 “Somos el cuerpo de Cristo” (We are the body of Christ)
- *Sing the Journey* 69 “Cuando el pobre” (When the poor ones)
- *Sing the Story* 115 “Beauty for brokenness”
- *Hymnal: A Worship Book* 419 “Lead on, O cloud of Presence”



BENEDICTION

May you go out looking for those who don’t have a place to stay. Remember that Joseph and Mary had to run for their lives and the life of infant Jesus. Remember that Jesus never found a place to rest his head. And remember that we are all immigrants in this world, foreigners and nomads here on earth. Open the doors for each other, prepare a table for each other and offer hospitality to all without asking for their documents or their origin. May the peace of Christ be with us all.

-- Adapted from Christian Churches Together, Worship Service for Immigrants

