

SCOTTISH FAITHS
ACTION FOR REFUGEES

23 JUNE 2024

STAND UP FOR SANCTUARY

Worship Resources
for Sanctuary Sunday

02

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03

INTRODUCTION

On the 23rd June churches around the UK will be marking Sanctuary Sunday. This is a special Sunday focused on refugees and people displaced from their homes around the world. This year it will be marked on 23rd June, the final day of Refugee Week (and Refugee Festival Scotland). It is a time to celebrate the refugees who are part of our community, to pray for displaced people around the world, and to ask ourselves what we can do to welcome the stranger.

This resource is designed to help your congregation mark this important occasion. We approached a variety of contributors each with experience of working with, and building community alongside refugees. They took time to reflect on the scripture and draw out what it has to say to all of us this Sanctuary Sunday. Thank you to the worship team at Gorbals Parish Church, Anna-Claar Thomasson-Rosingh, the Salaam team at Edinburgh City Mission and Fiona Kendall. Each of them have taken seriously Jesus's challenge to welcome the stranger and love all of our neighbours as ourselves, and there is so much to be learned from their insights.

Our theme for this year is 'Stand up for Sanctuary'. This is based on the reading from 1 Samuel, the famous story of David and Goliath. We all know the story: on the one side of the valley stood a towering giant, a man so intimidating that an army of trained warriors were afraid to face him. On the other side a shepherd boy, facing him down with nothing but pebbles and prayer. When all others hid, David alone had the courage to stand against injustice, no matter what the odds. His courage didn't come from his own strength or the power of his sling. It came from knowing God was on his side, and no one, not even a giant, could change that.

The story of one boy standing up to impossible odds speaks deeply to experiences of displaced people. Every day refugees have to face challenges of huge proportions. They face the conditions that force people to flee their homes: destructive wars that show no signs of slowing, or persecution at the hands of people who would make a scapegoat of the other. Many endure harrowing journeys to find safety: long stints in refugee camps, perilous sea voyages, harassment by smugglers and authorities alike. And even those who successfully make it to the UK face a broken asylum system, the threat of being deported to Rwanda, and the long process of integration.

04

Every day refugees face these Goliaths, and every day refugees find the courage to live boldly. Across our nation 'New Scots' are building vibrant lives, enriching our communities, and giving back in countless ways. Even in the face of uncertainty refugees continue to live lives of hope and courage.

The challenge for all of us is, will we stand up for sanctuary? In the face of these modern Goliaths that rob people of safety and shelter, will we have the courage to make our voices heard? Will we challenge hostile laws that exclude vulnerable people, will we call for an end to wars that cause people to flee, and will we extend the hand of welcome to all those who come to our communities seeking sanctuary?

As you gather together on Sanctuary Sunday to worship the God who once fled as a refugee (Matthew 2:14), I would encourage you to be bold in your support for people seeking sanctuary. The challenges are daunting to be sure. In the face of terrible wars and cruel policies it can be so easy to feel helpless, like nothing we can do will ever make a difference. But the good news is we don't stand alone. We stand in solidarity with one another, and most importantly we know that God is with us. When others were saying he stood no chance against Goliath, David said, "The Lord, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine."

Our vision is a world where every single person can find safety, sanctuary, and community to love them. Some might say that is unrealistic or even impossible. But we have faith in a God for whom all things are possible.

Rowan Moodie

Co-ordinator, Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees



05

1 SAMUEL 17: 32-49

This reflection was prepared by Catriona Milligan, Community Development Worker at Gorbals Parish Church and Jo Love Worship Coordinator at Gorbals, one strand of her work as a member of the Wild Goose Resource Group, Iona Community. They drew on their experiences working with and alongside New Scots in the Gorbals community. The church has recently been advocating on behalf of Kaltouma Haroun Ibrahim, a refugee seeking to be reunited with her family. [Read more here.](#)

How many of us, since our own childhoods, have heard and loved how David took his pocketful of pebbles and his homemade sling, and showed a Shrek-sized enemy that victory cannot be assumed just because you're bigger, stronger, scarier, and have won the fight so many times before?

Where is this conflict still playing out, and does it offer insight if we draw any parallels with the experiences of people seeking refuge and asylum today? Have we wished we could see any David, when up against any Goliath, get the same result as the shepherd boy of long ago? How tempting to wish that all stories of one person, one family, seeking asylum in the face of the 'giants' of unjust laws, international conflict, persecution, hostile immigration systems, could pan out like this tale does.

David's chances look so slim. He is young, small, inexperienced. His confidence that he can take on Goliath sounds equally foolish as brave. Does he not understand the disparity of age, size, fighting skill? He leans on his track record against wild animals and the rescues from their ferocious attacks he has already known. How many metaphorical lions and bears are met as people are forced to flee for their lives – border guards, smugglers, unseaworthy boats, bribes to pay, bureaucracy to wade through?

David is given full armour, the best known, most conventional and well-tested means of protection, to afford him any chance of surviving. But it is too unfamiliar, too unwieldy. He cannot handle what would equip a well-trained warrior; one size does not fit all adult soldiers and boy shepherds.

Are there parallels here? How do laws, policies, systems fail to be fit for each individual case; fail to adequately protect each person in their unique situation?

06

Looking at the swift end point of the David and Goliath encounter, this polarised, two-dimensional struggle is far from a satisfying resolution, as it raises so many questions for our world. Don't the Goliaths have family who mourn them too? Where is the David whose case reaches a favourable outcome without months or years of complex negotiation, anxious waiting and lack of progress? Every David whose case eventually does reach a good outcome, cannot simply settle into a comfortable existence from there on, but has many challenges of integration ahead.

David's youthful victory did not win the peace. Israelites and Philistines continued to be enemies. David grew up to become what he had slain. His reputation as the greatest of ancient Israel's kings is primarily a fame for his military prowess and the thousands of enemies slaughtered in the name of achieving peace. In the eyes of many, David probably looked like another Goliath. Wearing full armour, wielding a sword with devastating accuracy. Horrific or heroic, depending whose side you were on.

The challenge to hostility and the practice of hospitality are loud absences in this story. What can we learn about how to refuse both swords and stones; refuse that kneejerk reaction of answering the threat of destruction with more destruction?

What would it have taken for both tribes to discover in each other their true warmth and humanity? What was needed to come to regard each other as sheltering company? How about imaginatively rewriting this encounter from the same starting point but taking a truly courageous route to a society all could rely on as safe?

Jo Love and Catriona Milligan (Gorbals Parish Church)

Catriona is Community Development Worker at Gorbals Parish Church. Jo is Worship Coordinator, one strand of her work as a member of the Wild Goose Resource Group, Iona Community.

“

What can we learn about how to refuse both swords and stones; refuse that kneejerk reaction of answering the threat of destruction with more destruction?

”

07

FINDING OUR VOICE

The title of this year's resource is 'Stand up for Sanctuary'. Around the world we have seen politicians attack the principles of sanctuary, trying to make it harder for refugees to find safety and shelter. In the UK this has manifested in the Rwanda Plan, a scheme that would see people fleeing wars and persecution deported to a country they have never visited without their case ever being heard. And this is just the latest in a long line of policies designed to create a 'hostile environment' for refugees.

If we disagree with these policies then it's important to speak up and make our voices heard. That can mean protesting and speaking to your MP/MSP, but that can also mean having a difficult conversation with a neighbour or family member. To help with this, here are some tips adapted from the excellent resource '[Speak up for Sanctuary](#),' created by City of Sanctuary and available free from their website.

YOUR STORY MATTERS

One of the most common worries people express about speaking up for refugee rights is 'what if I don't have all the facts and arguments to convince people'. It's an understandable worry, but the latest research shows that one of the most effective ways to shift people's minds is to share personal stories.

The most simple but powerful story you can share is what led you to become passionate about refugees. It doesn't need to be exciting or dramatic, it simply needs to convey why this is important to you.

Example: "I didn't know much about refugees until a hotel housing asylum seekers was opened in my town. I started volunteering at an English language class and through that I got to know the residents and learn about their lives. I have made good friends there and have enjoyed welcoming them to our community."

08

REFRAME, DON'T REPEAT

When speaking to people it is important to counter harmful attitudes and stereotypes they might hold. However, it's been shown in studies that when we repeat the words of messages we are trying to discredit, we can accidentally end up reinforcing these messages. So, whilst it's tempting to bust myths, by doing that we're only giving those myths more airtime. Instead we should try to reframe the situation, focusing our language towards a more positive framing.

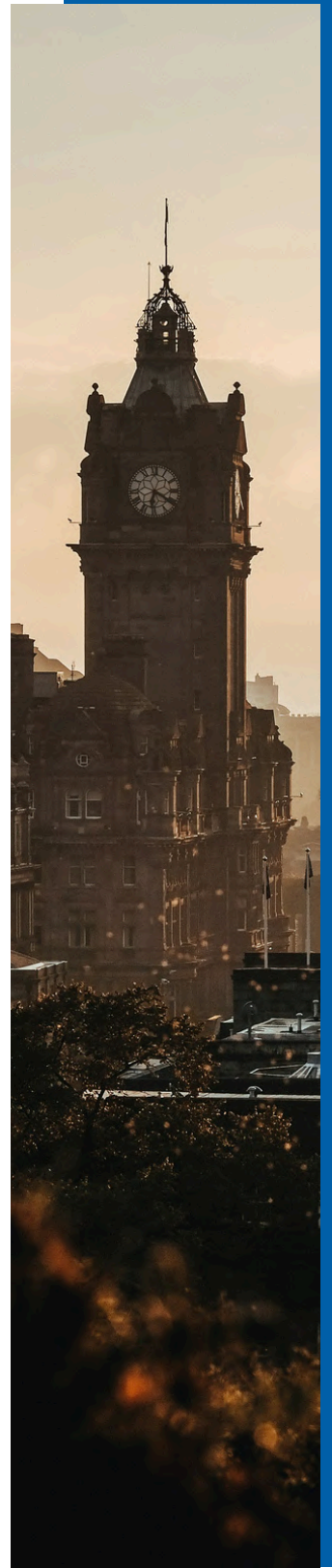
Example: Instead of saying "No human being is illegal", reframe as "Wherever we come from, we all have a right to feel safe".

FIND COMMON GROUND

We can't win over everyone, there are some people who have very fixed views that we are unlikely to ever convince. But thankfully they are not the majority. Studies have estimated that the population can be roughly split into three: 25% are actively pro-refugee, 25% are hostile and around 50% are undecided. This leaves plenty of people who are open to changing their minds.

When speaking to the undecided middle it's important not to dismiss people's concerns. Instead, we should listen and try to address those concerns with compassion. Appealing to values we share in common makes it easier to build empathy

Example: "I really respect that you care so much about our local community. Here are some of the benefits I have experienced from getting to know the refugees who have moved to our neighbourhood..."



09

PSALM 9:9-20

This reflection was written by Anna-Claar Thomasson-Rosingh, an Episcopalian priest who worked as the chaplain at Dungavel Immigration Detention Centre before she became the Director of Studies of the Scottish Episcopal Institute. She still volunteers regularly at Dungavel and her reflection was written in collaboration with people being held in detention at the Removal Centre.

The “oppressed” in the first verse of this reading are “crushed”. The Hebrew word *dak* is rather unusual, found only four times in the psalms and proverbs. To be detained in an Immigration Removal Centre is crushing in a rather unusual way. At the stroke of the pen of a relatively junior civil servant, detainees find themselves locked-up with no idea for how long and sometimes no idea why. “I don’t belong here” is a sentence I often hear in Dungavel. They wonder: will it be a few days, a few weeks, a few months or maybe years? This is so cruel, so crushing that internationally we call it torture; in Britain it is just part of signalling how strict we are on immigration. A lot of people do not even know it happens.

I spoke with a small group of men detained in Dungavel about Psalm 9. For them the Psalm feels far away. They feel forsaken, however much they seek God (v.10). They find it so hard to trust anyone. The phrase “gates of death” (v.13) is one they recognise as most of them have struggled with suicidal thoughts and have been on “constant watch” for their safety while in detention. This place is for them the gate of death. They wonder whether God will ever “lift them up” – an immediate symbol for freedom. The psalmist may feel delivered (v.14), they do not. They do admire him (or her) for sticking with God amid trouble and this is a real challenge to them.

WHAT IS DUNGAVEL?

Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre is the only detention centre in Scotland, located in rural South Lanarkshire. People can be held here for months pending deportation without any sentence. Large numbers of the people who are detained are never deported.

Were you aware of the existence of Dungavel?

How can we raise awareness of people who may feel forgotten?

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Then we come to the verses on judgement. All three of the men I spoke to are ex-offenders and not sure whether they just got stuck in a net of their own making (v15). Who are the wicked? We have all forgotten God from time to time. Who hasn't? (v.17) The lines between us and them; the goodies and the baddies, the immigrant and the home office are not clear cut. They are both victim and perpetrator; so am I. Colluding with all the "safety" measures in place to have this conversation, I have become complicit in the torture I so despise. We try to navigate the psalm both identifying with "the wicked" (v16), "the nations" (v.15) and with the "needy" (v.18).

The last verse comes as such a relief. All of us know so very deeply that we are only human and that God is God. That judgement is God revealing Godself (v.16) and us becoming aware of our humanity (v.20). This judgement sounds indeed like hope and like a stronghold. There is awe and there is longing for God to be gracious, to rise up, to deliver. There is longing for the acknowledgement of our common humanity to transform the particular oppression of these men and the systems in which they got caught.

Rev. Dr. ACA Thomasson-Rosingh (volunteer chaplain, Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre)

“

The lines between us and them; the goodies and the baddies, the immigrant and the home office are not clear cut. They are both victim and perpetrator; so am I.

”

11

2 CORINTHIANS 6:1-13

This reflection was written by the Salaam team of Edinburgh City Mission. Edinburgh City Mission partners with local churches to facilitate and strengthen mission across Edinburgh. Salaam (Arabic for 'peace') is a ministry that provides care and support for asylum seekers and refugees, offering befriending, conversation cafés, weekend clubs and more.

Through the work of Salaam, we have had the heart-breaking honour to meet New Scots who have had to leave their home countries and move to Edinburgh in search of safety and a more hopeful future. As we read this passage, the similarities between Paul's experiences and what people who have been displaced face are striking: troubles, hardships, distresses, imprisonment, hunger, sorrow, dishonour, being unknown, etc.

In this letter to the church in Corinth, Paul is reminding his fellow believers of the 'upside-down-ess' of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is in the hidden, in the small, and in the beauty of sacrificial love. This full-of-Grace Kingdom is provocatively and counterculturally different from the kingdom of the world—and it is imminently here (v.1).

Perhaps you, like us and like our brothers and sisters in Corinth, at times can be blinded by status, appearances, comfort and the power that the world values. Paul and our New Scot neighbours teach us to look beneath the outward appearances and the 'single story' narrative trap. They invite us to examine our hearts and consider how we are living: Are we following the way of Jesus or the way of the world? Are we looking beyond the appearances to the beauty of the image of God in all of us?



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In fairness to our anxious hearts, we are living through difficult and uncertain times. In the face of scarcity, it is very tempting to shut down, withdraw or escape. Yet Paul invites us to follow Jesus into an expansive life of grace, faith and love. Eugene Peterson reflects this invitation to countercultural, defiant living in The Message translation of verses 11-13:

“

Dear, dear Corinthians, I can't tell you how much I long for you to enter this wide-open, spacious life. We didn't fence you in. The smallness you feel comes from within you. Your lives aren't small, but you're living them in a small way. I'm speaking as plainly as I can and with great affection. Open up your lives. Live openly and expansively!

2 Corinthians 6: 11-13 (The Message)

”

Although it is hard to live with open hearts, God has equipped us with everything we need. God has given us Jesus who has given us new life through his life, death and resurrection. We also have God's Spirit who leads us into holiness. Finally, we have each other (including our New Scot friends) to encourage and challenge us to continue to pursue the way of Love.

- What does it mean for you to live expansively?
- What are your values? Are they aligned with Kingdom values?
- What things do you learn from your New Scot neighbours? How is your life richer from having them in your life?
- As you consider this, what might God be inviting you to do?

Salaam Team (Edinburgh City Mission)

13

MARK 4:35-41

This reflection was written Fiona Kendall, a mission partner shared by the Church of Scotland, Methodist Church in Britain and Global Ministries (UCC/Disciples of Christ). She is seconded to the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy (FCEI) where she works within its Mediterranean Hope migrant and refugee programme. There, her primary focus is policy and advocacy in the field of safe passage. Fiona is also Moderator of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME). This reflection was informed by Mediterranean Hope's work on Lampedusa.

The experiences we have can lead us to view Bible readings through a different lens. Now six years into working alongside Mediterranean Hope, a team within the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy whose whole focus is people on the move, my reading of this passage has sharpened. The mortal danger faced by those who journey in barely seaworthy vessels has become a daily reality. Having now seen for myself crude boats and exhausted souls who arrive on Lampedusa, I have a far keener sense of the panic attributed to the disciples as their vulnerability to the elements becomes evident.

Extreme vulnerability. Asylum seekers are not only at the mercy of the weather and the waves. Their modest ambition to reach a place of safety is not within their gift to realise for, in truth, they are entirely at the mercy of the decisions of others: those who manage borders; those who make and implement asylum policy; those who weaponize migration for political gain; those whose genuine fear of "the other" – or of poverty – contributes to an atmosphere of casual racism and hostility to migrants.

LAMPEDUSA

Lampedusa is a small Italian island located just 113km from the North African coast. It has become a major arrival point for people seeking asylum in Europe. The crossing is incredibly dangerous, with one tragic incident in 2013 claiming 360 lives.

Mediterranean Hope work to support migrants on Lampedusa, as well as engage and work with the local population.

Read more about Mediterranean Hope [here](#).

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Few of us experience such vulnerability. Yet most of us know, at some level, what it is to feel terror, anxiety and desperation. How often, in these circumstances, might we too have voiced the disciples' accusation: "Teacher, don't you care..."? Yet, in the passage, when challenged, Christ does not confine himself to simple reassurances. He dismantles the storm entirely and, in doing so, reminds us how far beyond our imagination his power goes. We are confined by our own horizons. He smashes them open.

**“
This passage invites
us to trust God
completely and, in so
doing, to see our fears
entirely dismantled.
”**

Is it too much to permit him to do this in our lives? This passage invites us to trust God completely and, in so doing, to see our fears entirely dismantled. It may also be inviting us to consider what we, as God's hands and feet, are doing to dismantle the fears and vulnerabilities of those around us. For, in lifting the veil of fear, faith is revealed.

Fiona Kendall (European & Legal Affairs Advisor at FCEI-Mediterranean Hope)



15

PRAYING FOR REFUGEES

On all days, but especially on Sanctuary Sunday, it is so important to keep in our prayers people around the world who have fled their homes in search of safety and peace. Across our world there are over 114 million individuals who have been displaced from their homes. This is a huge number and the scale of it can be overwhelming, so we have included some prayer points that you can incorporate into your worship, as well as pre-written prayers that can be used in worship.

Prayer Points

PRAY FOR REFUGEES ACROSS THE WORLD

- Pray for nations where people are being displaced by wars i.e. Syria, Ukraine, Sudan, Yemen, Gaza
- Pray for countries where people face persecution, including for their religious faith i.e. Afghanistan, Iran, Myanmar.
- Pray for all those around the world still in transit or living in refugee camps.

PRAY FOR REFUGEES IN THE UK

- Pray for people in the asylum system waiting on their cases to be heard. This is a stressful wait, and on top of that people are often surviving on as little as £8.50 per week and now living with the fear of being deported to Rwanda.
- Pray for people who have arrived to the UK through resettlement schemes. They often require support in learning English, finding work, and the difficulties of adjusting to a new life.
- Pray for the health and wellbeing of all refugees, with a special consideration for those suffering the effects of trauma, and the thousands of refugee children who arrive unaccompanied each year.

PRAY FOR PEOPLE SUPPORTING REFUGEES

- Pray for charities and NGOs supporting refugees such as the Scottish Refugee Council, Maryhill Integration Network, Refuweegee, Refugee Sanctuary Scotland, and The Welcoming.
- Pray for Community Sponsorship groups who arrange for refugee families to be resettled and support them for their first two years.
- Pray for all the churches and faith groups who are providing a faithful welcome.

16

PRAYER OF APPROACH (JO LOVE)

Hospitable God, you enfold us;
Compassionate Jesus, you uphold us;
Advocating Spirit, you are the wind at our backs.
Trinity of Love,
because of you, the universe exists
in all its unfathomable depths,
in all its meticulous detail.
What an astonishing thing to do!
What a labour of love!
Thank you for giving us a place in your creation,
for making each one of us, an unrepeatable wonder,
and setting us on this earth in this time.
When we recognise your presence, life is better.
When we call on your help and spend time with you, life is better.
When you break in on our consciousness
with your timely, gentle, surprising, funny, startling ways of saying
hello,
life is better.
Thank you God for always coming to meet us where we are,
at our best, at our worst, in ordinariness, in crisis,
you welcome us and offer help and healing.
So will you silence any fears that we don't deserve your love,
take away any guilt from mistakes we have made,
bring us close to you,
cheer us up and cheer us on.
In Jesus' name we pray,
Amen.

17

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND CONFESSION (VERONIQUE, ST. ROLLOX, A REFUGEE FROM DRC)

Heavenly Father,
I bow my heart to you and pray.
I give you thanks for all you've
done.
Thank you for being my refuge and
my strength.
Thank you for your goodness in my
life.
When I wake each morning,
I praise your name.
I give thanks to you that no matter
what the circumstances,
I can count on you to shelter me
And to give me strength.
Almighty God,
Merciful Father,
I, a poor miserable sinner,
I confess to you all my sins and
iniquities,
Those known and unknown.
I'm not perfect
And I fall short every day of my
life.
Thank you for your mercy
In Jesus' name. Amen.

LITANY OF JUSTICE

Reader: Jesus said, "I was hungry
and you gave me food." Made in
the Image of God, I was hungry and
you gave me food." Made in the
Image of God,

All: We see the face of Christ in all.

Reader: Jesus said, "I was thirsty
and you gave me something to
drink." Made in the Image of God,

All: We see the face of Christ in all.

Reader: Jesus said, "I was a
stranger and you welcomed me."
Made in the Image of God,

All: We see the face of Christ in all.

Reader: Jesus said, "I was naked
and you gave me clothing." Made
in the Image of God,

All: We see the face of Christ in all.

Reader: Jesus said, "I was sick and
you took care of me." Made in the
Image of God,

All: We see the face of Christ in all.

Reader: Jesus said, "I was in prison
and you visited me." Made in the
Image of God,

All: We see the face of Christ in all.

Reader: Jesus said, "In as much as
you did to one of those considered
to the least important, you did it to
me." Made in the Image of God,

All: We see the face of Christ in all.

**We go from here to see and serve
Christ in all.**

Amen.

18

INTERCESSIONS

God of family, we bring before you the parents who are weeping and lamenting, who are waiting for their children, whose trace is lost in the sea, in the desert, on railway tracks, in shipping containers and uncertainty: men, women and children who had escaped from the war zones, the famine and poverty of this world, with the hope for a better, safer life.

God of life, we bring before you our lament for the dead, stranded at the borders of safety, who died fleeing through deserts, over mountains and seas. We call to you and join in the cry of all those who sought justice and a better life for themselves and their children and perished in the process.

God of justice, we bring before you political leaders, advisers and decision-makers who hold the fate of others in their hands. Make them aware of the causes of migration and flight. Keep their consciences alive so that refugees are offered protection and dignity. Let them agree rules of residence that are based on human rights and guided by solidarity compassion.

God of peace, give us the strength to be witnesses of the suffering of the world and fill us with the fire of your spirit to renew our efforts to serve those in need and give us the grace to welcome, learn and share our lives with people who come to live in our communities. Amen.

BLESSING (FIONA KENDALL)

May the storms within and around you be stilled;
May you recall the depth of God's love
And the breadth of God's power;
And may you, too, bring calm to all you meet.
Amen

19

NEXT STEPS

Marking Sanctuary Sunday in your Sunday worship can raise the question of “what next?”, what can our community do to support refugees? Churches have always been among the first to welcome refugees and people seeking sanctuary to Scotland. Be that Syrian families resettled across all local authorities across Scotland, Ukrainians living with hosts in our communities, or people living in temporary accommodation while their asylum claims are being heard, churches have thrown open their doors.

Here are some suggested next steps:

STEP 1: LEARN

Before taking any action, it is important to take time to learn about the lives that refugees and asylum seekers are living. A good place to start can be reading about the situation facing refugees in this country and worldwide. We can recommend the SFAR guide **Sanctuary in Scotland** as an accessible resource specifically written for faith groups. It can be freely accessed online here:

<https://www.sfar.org.uk/resources/publications/>

As well as general information, it's important to learn about your own community. Are there refugees in your local area? If so, where are they housed and are there particular needs you can help them to meet? Consider reaching out to local refugee charities or your local authorities' refugee and resettlement team.

Finally, the best source of information is meeting refugees and learning from their first-hand experiences. If you are not sure how to go about this, please contact SFAR for advice and information.

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STEP 2: IDENTIFY AN ACTION

With some context under your belt, it is helpful to identify what action your church might want to take. Sometimes when learning about the situation facing refugees, people can feel overwhelmed by the range and scale of the unmet needs. In these moments it can be helpful to focus on a few achievable actions. This could be:

- **Running a welcome hub** so that when people arrive in a new area the first thing they experience is a friendly face.
- **Hosting English classes** where people can improve their language skills (and get used to the Scottish accents). If the prospect of running a class is intimidating a conversation café might be a more informal alternative.
- **Providing practical help** with acquiring basics such as clothes and toiletries. This is especially important for people seeking asylum who are often living on just £8.50 per week. The key is making sure to speak to refugees and asylum seekers to identify what they actually need.
- **Raising money** to support organisations helping refugees abroad such as Hungarian Reformed Church Aid in Ukraine, St Andrews Refugee Service (StARS) in Egypt, and Christian Aid across the world.
- **Opening community spaces** where people can gather in safety, relax and build supportive relationships together.
- **Speaking out** against government policies that cause harm for refugees, and championing causes that will make a tangible difference in people's lives. A great example of this is last year's successful campaign for free bus travel for asylum seekers.

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STEP 3: PREPARE

Once you have your idea it is important to do the necessary planning and preparation. This will include the usual risk assessing, volunteer recruitment, and training. Some additional considerations when working with refugees and asylum seekers are:

- **Language barriers** How will language differences impact the events/services you would like to run.
- **Cultural sensitivity** Learn about some of the cultural norms and expectations of the people you are working with (i.e. gender roles, religious practices, dietary requirements) and make appropriate adjustments. But it is also important not to fall into stereotyping. If in doubt ask!
- **Trauma informed** Be aware that people will likely have experienced deeply traumatising situations and so respond with sensitivity. Be sure to also care well for your volunteers as they hear about other people's trauma.
- **Financial sensitivity** Refugees, particularly asylum seekers, can often have very limited finances. Be conscious of this in planning (i.e. don't expect that everyone can afford to buy bus tickets).

STEP 4: GO!

Be bold and commit to supporting people seeking sanctuary. Be willing to change and adapt as time goes on, and enjoy the experience of building relationships with new and interesting people. And please do share your progress with us at SFAR, we would love to hear from you.

22

STAY IN TOUCH



We would love to hear from you, especially if you have used this resource. For more information visit: www.sfar.org.uk or email the Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees, co-ordinator.

Rowan Moodie
rmoodie@churchofscotland.org.uk

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees (SFAR) is a partnership project which seeks to co-ordinate and promote action by faith communities in Scotland to support asylum seekers and refugees. Since 2015 we have brought together Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Interfaith groups to build on our common values of hospitality and the inherent dignity of each individual. We believe that by working together for the common good, by putting aside prejudices and agreeing to cross barriers of culture, language, religion and nationality, that faith communities can play a crucial role in making Scotland a welcoming country for refugees.

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees is administered by the Church of Scotland, Scottish Charity Number SC011353