

Day of intercession in memory of those who have lost their lives at the borders of the EU

Information, Intercessions and Ideas

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Foreword

In June 2018 we had to witness again that EU states are shifting the responsibility for the protection of refugees and rescuing migrants at sea – leading to lengthy journeys of ships, like the Aquarius of SOS Mediterranee and Mediciens sans frontières MSF, who had rescued hundreds of migrants off the coast of Libya. For migrants such journeys add to the uncertainties and fears. Fortunately, this time Spain and France offered to take them. Yet, Europe does need a more humane system, allowing access to the territory so that deaths at the borders can be minimised.

In July 2009 the Conference of European Churches declared in Lyon: “As churches in Europe we commit ourselves to commemorate those who have died on their journey to find a dignified life in Europe through an annual day of prayer.” This call was reiterated by the CEC Assemblies in Budapest 2013 and Novi Sad 2018. Around 20 June, World Refugee Day, churches and human rights groups in different European countries will point to the lethal consequences of sealing off the external borders of the EU. Such sealing off takes place through technically sophisticated systems of border protection, through the extension of border protection measures to neighbouring and transit states of the EU, and through readmission agreements with neighbouring and transit states, even when they violate human rights. Churches and human rights groups in the United States of America, at whose border with Mexico countless migrants meet their deaths, are also taking part. Thus the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) agreed in July 2010 to join this initiative of the European churches.

Churches will remember in prayer the nameless dead who frequently disappear without trace in the sea or in the desert. Their lament, which went unheard by human beings, will be brought before God. What takes place at the borders - far from public scrutiny and control - will be brought to public awareness. Background reports will provide information about the situation of human rights at the borders. Politicians will be reminded of their responsibility finally to take effective measures to protect human beings and human rights.

Since November 2010, the synod of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) called for the protection of human rights and addressed the externalisation of borders of EU.

This means working towards, in particular:

- Refugee and migration policies that are based on human rights, solidarity and responsibility, and equally important
- “The creation of mandatory guidelines for the operations of FRONTEX (the EU external borders agency),
- The identification of refugees and their access to international protection being part of the training of border officials,
- Civil society organizations becoming more effectively consulted and involved in the development and implementation of training measures,
- The setting up of an independent monitoring system to monitor FRONTEX activities, in order to provide regular reports for the EU institutions about compliance with European and international law, particularly with fundamental and human rights.”

The EKD questioned the interest-driven politics at the expense of human rights in order to “secure” European borders against migrants and refugees at the behest of the EU, human rights violations are put up with in countries of origin and transit.

In 2017 the representatives of the **Finnish faith communities** and human rights organisations expressed their deep concern;

- About freedom of conscience and religion for asylum seekers to be secured in line with international practices.
- Against a policy to place all asylum seekers in detention centres and limit their rights to personal freedom.
- The increase in discrimination and hate speech towards those who profess religions and beliefs, especially minorities in Finland-

They also called for safe routes to Europe for refugees and considered humanitarian visas and raising refugee quotas as means for easing the crisis, with the former potentially being a means of reuniting families.

In 2016, The Federation of Protestant Churches in **Italy** made an appeal to the international community, to European and international leaderships, to the still indifferent or hesitant before the suffering of migrants and refugees. Commemorating the shipwreck off the coast of Lampedusa in October 2013, the FCEI organized an international conference in October 2017 in Palermo and Lampedusa, assessing the situation in the Mediterranean. The FCEI expressed its solidarity with humanitarian organisations undertaking search and rescue operations when a Spanish organisation was criminalized and their boat confiscated.

Asked for the new migration policies making the European Governments and institutions adopt reception policies putting an end to massacres at sea, to the brutality of human trafficking, to the fear of those fleeing from persecution, war, violence and poverty.

The Christian Council of **Sweden** Churches, in 2017 called for the respect of the fundamental human rights to be applied to all including migrants and asked to welcome all people, regardless of their origin, ethnicity and religion, who come to their congregations. In the most fundamentally Christian way, we will remember in acts of worship those who have died fleeing across the Mediterranean.

Together churches in Europe have called for Safe Passage since 2014, opening up different legal pathways for migrants and refugees in Europe.

As a date we suggest each year a Sunday around 20 June, World Refugee Day (*in 2018: Sunday 24th June*). There are also other regular opportunities: during the intercultural week in Germany, which includes Refugee Day; on the International Human Rights Day, 10 December; during Lent; or in November, when many churches hold peace weeks, and the church year offers a particular occasion to remember those who have died.

The fence of an informal cemetery at the Greek-Turkish border. An unknown number of nameless victims who died in the river Evros which marks the border are buried here.



MIGRATION JOURNEY

Exodus 14 “My People on Move”, God’s people...

When the Israelites were escaping slavery from Egypt, they faced terrible difficulties, considering that Pharaoh was following them trying to take them back in slavery, violence and persecution that they were going through in Egypt, it made them to cry out to God again for help. They went through desert and sea, with fear and sorrows, many of them died on the way.



When fear knocks, let Faith answer the door; Robin Roberts

This experience speaks to us in many ways when we consider the difficult journeys of our fellow humans; migrants and refugees nowadays known as “Migration Crisis”. They are in the same situation as Israelites, we should understand them as people who have been suffering from violence and persecutions and forced to flee from their own countries and homes, to pass through deserts, prisons, slavery, seas and other terrible sorrows just to find a refuge. Their decisions to make such desperate difficult journeys, is the only one choice left for them, **it’s about deciding to die at home or to die on move**. However, still many of our European communities are yet to understand the reality of what is happening at our borders. The Mediterranean Sea has become a gate to death and the [grave to thousands](#) of migrants, unfortunately, such things repeat themselves every single day and the policies put in place are full of violations of human rights. How long shall God’s creation endure such a violence?

Information for newsletters or for church notices

During this celebration and commemoration ceremony which has been adopted as a tradition over the past years by CCME and other Christians around Europe, at the service we remember in particular migrants and refugees who have died on their way to Europe.

We deplore the lethal consequences of sealing off the external borders of the European Union that is taking place through increasingly sophisticated technical systems of border protection, through the transfer of border protection measures to neighbouring and transit states of the EU in Africa and Eastern Europe, and through readmission agreements with neighbouring and transit states, the year of 2016 has been characterised by an acceleration of policies of externalisation and shifting of controls on refugees and migrants, the EU- Turkey deal, even when human rights are violated in these states. It is clear that the European Union migration policy aims at reducing numbers of migrants crossing to Europe disregarding the consequences for them in Libya, Mali, Niger and Turkey.” These measures force migrants and refugees to turn to smugglers bearing higher risks.

After examining media reports the human rights organization “[Fortress Europe](#)” came to the conclusion that in the period of from 1993 at least 33,305 people died at the borders of Europe. On 3rd October 2013 one of the worst single day deaths tolls on the European border was reached with over 350 migrants drowning of the coast of the small Italian Island of Lampedusa. This tragedy has shone a light on this ongoing crisis with 14,309 persons having died in the Mediterranean and Atlantic Sea in their attempt to reach Europe over the last fifteen years.

Between 16-18 April 2016, one of the worst tragedies ever of migrants’ death in the Mediterranean Sea was reported, a one-day death toll was estimated at 500, reaching the estimated figure of dead and missing migrants and refugees within the region from 2014-2016 according to “International Organization for Migration” of 8,392 as of 2 May 2016.

Loss of lives continues: According to the Missing Migrants Project report, the year of 2017 ended with 2,121 deaths in the Mediterranean Sea, two-thirds of the global total of 3,111 recorded deaths.¹ The aggravation of the migrants and refugee’s situation in 2017 was again heard in the media when a video was broadcasted with migrants and refugees being auctioned as goods in Libya and others witnessing to have been bought to work as slaves and to be exploited.² The Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe and the Conference of European Churches called the EU to protect migrants’ rights and to [end their sufferings](#) in Libya. Sadly, the likelihood of dying among people seeking to reach Europe is still alarmingly high and such things continue to happen with the violations of rights provided in conventions on the human rights that many states signed.

Migration is not a sin, but many continue to describe it as a threat to the European communities: The rising [populist](#) parties campaign against migration, and some leaders openly use hate speech, orienting media to publicise a negative migration image, giving dehumanizing names to migrants and refugees, mentioning that “[Europe is Full](#)”, and misuse³ political interests through campaigns by pledging for mass deportation of the so called illegal migrants present on their territory. Such declarations create stereotypes increasingly widespread among European citizens, and may lead to more abuses and violent acts against refugees and migrants.

The EU is interested in managing migration flows by all possible means, the budget allocation to migration is to be doubled in comparison to the previous years in order to strengthen security and to manage internal and external borders.⁴ Horribly, only from January to June 2018 the migrants’ death toll in the Mediterranean Sea was already 792 people according to the records of IOM. This continuation of losses of lives seems to be growing and sadly, the actual number of victims is much higher than this, since many deaths go unrecorded. *More info at* <http://www.euronews.com/2018/01/11/2018-already-proves-deadly-for-migrants>

¹ <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/11/14/africa/libya-migrant-auctions/index.html>

² http://www.ccme.be/fileadmin/filer/ccme/20_Areas_of_Work/01_Refugee_Protection/2017-12-18-International_migrant_day_statement.pdf

³ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-43167699>

⁴ source; <https://missingmigrants.iom.int>

The Importance of Remembrance in the perspective of the Bible

The Bible provides significance to commemoration, as something that leads to or results from purposeful action. It is also an integral part of worship and of the functioning of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. Occasionally, it is referred to as think, mention, or record.

The act of remembrance is like a recognition: God himself introduced it after making covenants with human beings. In *Genesis 1:27-28*, we find God creating Human beings in his image. He gave them the world and power to rule and take care of all creatures. He blessed them and made a covenant with them and to their descendants to live all over the earth. This covenant of course, God had to remember it in order to fulfil his promises. God himself is against all kinds of human destruction including the one caused by water, during Noah's time, after the flooding that killed all creatures except Noah and all who were him in the ark, God made another covenant with Noah and his descendant. *Genesis 9:15* "and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh". After Noah's time, God promised Abraham to be the father and a blessing to all humanity. In *Gen 26:4*, we see how God remembered his covenant to Abraham and blessed his descendants. In *Gen. 40:14* while in prison, Joseph tells Pharaoh's chief butler, "But please remember me when everything is going well for you, and please be kind enough to mention me to the king and help me get out of this prison." Joseph knew the importance of remembrance and asked the chief butler to do so and finally, through the kings' dream, he was remembered and explained the dream and taken out of the prison. The Israelites were taken from slavery because of God's remembrance as in *Exodus 2:24* "And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob." as a result to rescue Israelites' from slavery and suffering. *Luke 1:54-55* "He has given help to Israel His servant, In remembrance of His mercy, God himself commended Israelites to continuously remember how his mighty hand took them out of slavery in Egypt.

The New Testament as well, consider commemoration a very important part of Christianity; *1 Corinthians 11:25* Jesus commanded his disciples to remember his death (his blood and body) and resurrection so that they may gain strength from remembrance to love God and to stand firm and do justice.

This is the time to stand for the defence of God's creation from violence and unjust acts, a struggle to advocating for adequate policy responding to the situation. Looking back at what happened through commemorations, and imagine the pains migrants went through and the unceasing sorrows to have observed their relatives or friends swallowed by the sea, shall awaken our conscience to stand for human rights and the dignity of every person. Commemoration is a way of raising awareness to the public of the tragedies that are taking place at our borders and to recognise that a lack of solidarity and providing a positive response may result in such losses of lives. Commemoration is to strive for justice and amity, to show love and humbleness as the word of God asks us to do and then bring about respect and dignity of the persons, and to prevent further losses.



Paintings from the borders, Francesco Piobbichi, Mediterranean Hope

According to the Bible, remembrance is much more than a mental exercise. It is a recognition that either leads to or results from an appropriate action.⁵ In our lives, let us remember through our ways of worship the lives of migrants and refugees who died in the Mediterranean Sea seeking for a refuge in Europe, so that our leadership in charge of this matter and the policy makers understands our voices and prevent such losses of lives by providing adequate measures. Therefore, since we have peace and security, freedom of movement and expression, let us remember that the word of God urges to be thankful to God and to do justice, not ignoring those facing violence and forced to flee from their home communities.

Leviticus 25:23 **“The land is Mine”** The Lord says you are strangers and live as foreigners with me.

⁶Exodus 22:21 "Do not mistreat an alien or oppress him, for you were aliens in Egypt."

Exodus 23:9 "You shall not oppress an alien, for you know the heart of an alien, seeing you were aliens in the land of Egypt."

Jesus says: »For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me in.« (Mt 25:35, NIV)



Graveyard Lampedusa, October 2017

⁵ Source <http://graceandknowledge.faithweb.com/zakar.html>

⁶ https://www.iaumc.org/files/fileslibrary/Scripture_and_Thoughts.pdf

Ideas for worship

- Silently take minutes to remember the persons who died.
- Read news and reports, and in between sing or speak words of the Psalms.
- In some services we have put photographs of the trauma of boat people on a long black cloth, and each of us has had an opportunity to light a candle and to place it on the cloth while saying words of intercession.
- Small candles can be lit, they could be placed in a water bowl while keeping silence or praying.
- Reading names of died people (those known) while lighting candles for them
- We have used Taizé liturgies and chants, to give form to our silent horror.
- People have written intercessions and stuck them to a type of Wailing Wall.
- Some people have put dinghies in their churchyards
- Some have floated flowers and candles on water (rivers ...)
- Some have organized processions of mourning.
- Prayer of comfort for the families and relatives who lost their loved ones
- Giving form to shame, naming fear and awakening consciences can be tasks in themselves.



Ecumenical Commemoration Lampedusa, 3 October 2017

At the start of the service greeting and call to respond

Liturgist: Friends, we have gathered here to praise God and to witness to our faith as we celebrate the life of migrants and refugees who have died on their way to Europe and at the EU's borders. We come together in grief, acknowledging our human loss. May God grant us and the family members and those survival victims, grace, that in pain we may find comfort, in sorrow hope, in death resurrection. *(Adapted from the United Methodist Book of Worship: A Service of Death and Resurrection) <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/a-service-of-death-and-resurrection>*

All: Respond to this call!

Let us in caring for our own future and the future of our countries not forget those who are fleeing, on their way to us, on the way to Europe.

Let us, in the face of the huge changes in the Arab countries and elsewhere, find a new policy that takes human rights seriously and does not do deals with dictatorships for our own economic interests nor raise up fences and security measures.

Let us remember those who have perished while fleeing, and those who die from despair in our own countries because of the cold and the indifference of others.

There will be a future in Europe only when we learn to share with each other, with the stranger among us. This is the promise of the Old and the New Testaments.

Lord help us that we may recognize and see your presence in those fleeing to us by welcoming them.

Let us prepare acts of worship, pray and light candles for the victims who are among us and for the many who have no name.

Let us not forget those who have died as victims of our border security systems, victims of our prosperity and egoism.

Let us remember together;

That God did not create borders in the world,

But humans after wars and conquests, through treaties, agreements and purchases, borders were established,

Remember that, we too have been refugees since time immemorial, that in many of our countries, our own fate as migrants and refugees has not been forgotten.

And let us measure the depths of our Christian faith by how we remember, commemorate and take action.

This is not an action or a campaign.

This is a moment to pause and reflect.

Herein lies the power.

This is an act of worship, a place where we struggle to hear the Word.

If we take this seriously, our words will have the power to heal.

The only indication that this is a cemetery is the sign riddled with bullets that states: "Cemetery of illegal immigrants."



Intercessional prayer and words of assurance for those who have died at the borders of Europe

Liturgist: Jesus said, I am the resurrection and I am the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, yet shall they live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I hold the keys of hell and death. Because I live, you shall live also. (John: 11:25-26).

All: Eternal God, the father of our Lord and saviour who hast commanded us to love and pray for each other; in your mercy have pity on the souls of our dear brothers and sisters who have departed this world and forgive them their trespasses; we pray that you make them and their families, relatives to meet again in the joy of everlasting brightness on that day of resurrection. Amen

Source: <http://connectusfund.org/15-best-prayers-for-deceased-mothers>

Liturgist: Lord, we bring to you the weeping and wailing of the mothers of this world, waiting for their children who have disappeared in the sea, in the desert, in uncertainty:

All: Refugees, men, women and children, from the war zones of this world, who are fleeing hunger and poverty, in the hope of a better, more secure life.

Liturgist: We bring to you our lament for those who have died stranded at our borders, those who have died fleeing through deserts, mountains and seas.

We call upon you and we join in the cry of those who have died seeking justice and a better world.

All: Lord, we bring to you our shame for turning away and remaining silent.

We have enough to eat in Europe - and do not see that we also create the causes of hunger.

We are insatiable - and do not see that this is the cause of many wars.

We are silent, where we need to take action.

Liturgist: Lord, we bring before you political leaders, who are not making decisions about mere numbers, but about the fate of many individual human beings. Sharpen their awareness of how things are interrelated. Keep their consciences alert. Let them develop rules that are guided by humanity and vision.

All: Lord, give us the strength to bear witness to the suffering of your children on the run, on their way to us, at our borders, in refugee camps and among us, in detention, waiting to be deported, in fear of the dangers that lie ahead, in mourning for those who have died.

Help us, Lord. Amen

A further suggestion for intercession for migrants and refugees' journey

Lord, you were once a refugee as the small child from the manger fleeing to Egypt. We pray for all those who are fleeing persecution, adversity and hopelessness. Lord, you led your people through the desert for forty years. We pray for all those who have been abandoned to the desert who disappear in the no man's land between the borders.

Lord, you called our fathers and mothers to seek a new beginning in a new, promised land. We pray for all those who have the courage to seek a new beginning in a new land where they hope to make their future. Lord, you rule over the raging of the sea; you still the waves when they rise up. We pray for all those drifting helplessly on the seas and drowning in the waves.

Violence against Refugees

In 2016, across Germany, there were more than 3,500 attacks on refugees and refugee accommodation. According to figures provided by the German government, 560 people were injured in these attacks; and amongst them were 43 children. In 2015 and 2016, about 1,000 criminal offences were reported each year, in which refugee accommodation was targeted. Compared with 2014, this figure had increased fivefold.

Lord, You divided the sea to let your people pass through
and made the waters as solid as a wall.

We pray for all those
for whom the sea is a wall
because we do not let them pass through.

Lord,
You have enjoined us to see refugees

As our neighbours.

We pray for us all.

That we might take responsibility for them.

A Memorial prayer

Holy God, your love is stronger than death, and your life-giving power has no end.
We commend to your eternal care all who have died in the Mediterranean sea,
as we lament the continuation of violence and war. Comfort and sustain all those who mourn. Heal the
wounded body, mind, and spirit. Bring justice, freedom, and dignity to all people and bring an end to wars
throughout the earth so that all may know your promised peace through Christ, the resurrection and the
life. Amen

By David Gambrell

Adopted from (<http://presbyterian.typepad.com/peacemaking/2011/05/prayers-for-memorial-day.html>)

Further Suggestion Prayer for Memorial Day

In the quiet sanctuaries of our own hearts,
let each of us name and call on the One whose power over us
is great and gentle, firm and forgiving, holy and healing...

You who created us,
who sustain us,
who call us to live in peace,
hear our prayer this day.

Hear our prayer for all who have died,
whose hearts and hopes are known to you alone ...

Hear our prayer for those who put the welfare of others
ahead of their own
and give us hearts as generous as theirs ...

Hear our prayer for those who lost their lives
in the Mediterranean sea,
and accept their courage to look for peace.

Help us to shape and make a world
where we will lay down the arms of war
and turn our swords into plough shares
for a harvest of justice and peace in the world.

Comfort those who grieve the loss of their loved ones
and let your healing be the hope in our hearts.

Hear our prayer this day
and in your mercy answer us
in the name of our Lord. Amen.

Source:<http://www.southpreschurch.org/southminster-this-week/a-prayer-for-memorial-day>

Suggestion for a prayer of intercession for those who assist

Lord, there is a terrible injustice that is happening and help is far away. We who are helping often feel helpless and do not know how to deal with what we encounter day after day. Some of us have grown up in protected environments.

Never have we felt so close to misery and suffering and we are afraid.

No concept, no solution, no political remedies in our country, in Europe.

Nothing that could be there and convince us that the suffering will have an end.

A huge void, given that so many have died. Shame and fine homilies.

No end to the lack of imagination. We burn out at work and are afraid.

Many look away; do not allow themselves to be touched by what's happening.

There's almost nothing in the media - and what there is stokes only new fears.

Help us to remain open, to allow ourselves to be touched, and to remain steadfast.

Because we are witnesses to what is happening.

We are witnesses to the injustice experienced by the people who tell us their stories.

Lord, support us and help us to maintain our stance in our society.

Help us to provide support and sanctuary to people who are fleeing.

Help us and them to live with their stories and to remain near to them.

Lord, be near to us.

Prayer for those who assist (Ps 46)

Liturgist: God is our refuge and constant strength, an ever-present help in the time of trouble and crisis.

All: The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Liturgist: Therefore, we will not fear, as we continue to work and speak against injustices, God will help as we work to lobby and advocate for "safe passages" to and through Europe for those seeking international protections.

All: The Lord Almighty is with us.

Liturgist: When justice for migrants and refugees shall prevail; we shall shout and say come and see what the Lord has done; He has broken down the invisible walls surrendering EU' borders. He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth.

All: God is our refuge and strength

Liturgist: He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among all nations and nationalities, I will be exalted in the earth." Despite our work in a broken world of violence, uncertainty, hunger, poverty, persecution, which are some of the driving forces leading to migrants' and refugees' tragedies.

All: The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

All: Amen

(Adapted from Psalm 46)



Photo: Paul Jeffrey, Serbia 2015

“The Church stands up for the weaker members of society and defends human dignity: every person is made in the image of God and life is always valuable and worth defending.” Jesus taught: **“Do to others as you would have them do to you.”** Helping people spiritually and materially is a big part of the work of congregations and the Church brings Christian values and perspectives to social dialogue and decision making. As an organisation, the Church is involved in cooperation for the benefit of those in need.

By the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church:
<https://evl.fi/tietoa-kirkosta/kirkko-ja-yhteiskunta/kirkko-vaikuttajana>

140 I Want Jesus to Walk with Me

Freely ♩ = ♩³ ♩

Cm G7 Cm G7 Cm G

1 I want Je - sus to walk with me;
 2 In my tri - als, Lord, walk with me;
 3 When I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;

C E^b B^b E^b G A^b

I want Je - sus to walk with me;
 in my tri - als, Lord, walk with me;
 when I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;

G Cm Dm7(b5) B^b7 Cm

all a - long my pil - grim jour - ney,
 when my heart is al - most break - ing,
 when my head is bowed in sor - row,

A^b B^b Cm A^b Fm G7 Cm Fm Cm

Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.
 Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.
 Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.

O God, Our Help in Ages Past

United Methodist Hymnal, No. 117

Capo 3: A

C F C Am Dm G C Am Em C D
D A F#m Bm E A F#m C#m A B

1. O God, our help in a - ges past, our hope for years to
 2. Un - der the shad - ow of thy throne, still may we dwell se -
 3. Be - fore the hills in or - der stood, or earth re - ceived her
 4. A thou - sand a - ges, in thy sight, are like an eve - ning
 5. Time, like an ev - er roll - ing stream, bears all who breathe a -
 6. O God, our help in a - ges past, our hope for years to

G C F Dm G C F E C Dm C F G C
E A D Bm E A D C# A Bm A D E A

come, our shel - ter from the storm - y blast, and our e - ter - nal home!
 cure; suf - fi - cient is thine arm a - lone, and our de - fense is sure.
 frame, from ev - er - last - ing, thou art God, to end - less years the same.
 gone; short as the watch that ends the night, be - fore the ris - ing sun.
 way; they fly for - got - ten, as a dream dies at the open - ing day.
 come; be thou our guide while life shall last, and our e - ter - nal home.

WORDS: Isaac Watts, 1719 (Psalm 90)

ST. ANNE

MUSIC: Attr. to William Croft, 1708; harm. by W. H. Monk, 1861

CM

The United Methodist General Board of Discipleship, Center for Worship Resourcing, PO Box 340003,
 Nashville, Tennessee 37203-0003. Telephone (615) 340-7070; Website <http://www.umcworship.org>;
 Email Address: WorshipCenter@gbod.org. This item is in the public domain.

An other Song

God of day and God of darkness,
 now we stand before the night.
 As the shadows stretch and deepen,
 come and make our darkness bright.
 All creation still is groaning
 for the dawning of your might.
 When the Sun of peace and justice
 fills the earth with radiant light.

Still the nations curse the darkness,
 still the rich oppress the poor.
 Still the earth is bruised and broken
 by the ones who still want more.
 Come and wake us from our sleeping,
 so our hearts cannot ignore
 all your people lost and broken,
 all your children at our door.

Show us Christ in one another.
 Make us servants strong and true.
 Give us all your love of justice,
 so we do what you would do.
 Let us call all people holy.
 Let us pledge our lives anew.
 Make us one with all the lowly.
 Let us all be one in you.

You shall be the path that guides us;
 you the light that in us burns.
 Shining deep within all people,
 yours the love that we must learn.
 For our hearts shall wander restless
 'til they safe to you return.
 Finding you in one another,
 we shall all your face discern.

Text: By [Marty Haugen](#) (1985)

God of Day and God of Darkness 859

1. God of day and God of dark - ness, Now we
 2. Still the na - tions curse the dark - ness, Still the
 3. You shall be the path that guides us, You the
 4. Praise to you in day and dark - ness, You our

stand be - fore the night; As the shad - ows stretch and
 rich op - press the poor; Still the earth is bruised and
 light that in us burns; Shin - ing deep with - in all
 source and you our end; Praise to you who love and

deep - en, Come and make our dark - ness bright. All cre -
 bro - ken By the ones who still want more. Come and
 peo - ple, Yours the love that we must learn. For our
 nur - ture As a fa - ther, moth - er, friend. Grant us

a - tion still is groan - ing For the dawn - ing of your
 wake us from our sleep - ing, So our hearts can - not ig -
 hearts shall wan - der rest - less 'Til they safe to you re -
 all a peace - ful rest - ing, Let each mind and bod - y

might, When the Sun of peace and jus - tice
 nore All your peo - ple lost and bro - ken,
 turn; Find - ing you in one an - oth - er,
 mend, So we rise re - freshed to - mor - row,

Fills the earth with ra - diant light.
 All your chil - dren at our door.
 We shall all your face dis - cern.
 Hearts re - newed to King - dom tend.

Text: Marty Haugen, b.1950, © 1985, 1994, GIA Publications, Inc.
 Tune: BEACH SPRING, 8 7 8 7 D; *The Sacred Harp*, 1844; harm. by Marty Haugen, b.1950, © 1985, GIA Publications, Inc.

Instead of a sermon: a meditation on a Psalm (Ps. 69)

Congregation: Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck.

In respect, we remember today the people of courage who have had to leave their homelands because they can no longer lead a decent life there. Many of them hoped to find refuge and a new home in Europe. They made use of everything they had and risked their health and their lives. Too many have died. This tragedy and this scandal have many aspects. There are the stories of the victims and their families. It is not just a question of a few individuals, however, but of unimaginably huge numbers of people. Their deaths were not inevitable, but in many cases were the result of deliberate action, or the failure to render assistance. And finally, it's about what these deaths mean to us, and how we avoid becoming mere spectators.

Congregation: I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me.

More than 33,305 people have died at the borders of Europe since 1993. Their deaths have been documented in press reports, and in reports from governmental and non-government agencies. What is not known is the number of deaths that have not been recorded or counted, the number of people who have disappeared without their names being known. They all sought a life in security and dignity, a life without fear and hunger. The doors of Europe remain closed to them forever.

Congregation: I am weary with my crying; my throat is parched.

Most of the victims drowned in the sea or in the rivers that mark the borders. Others suffocated in containers, died of thirst in the deserts, were shredded to pieces by the mines on the border between Greece and Turkey, froze to death in the mountains, died in the undercarriages of planes, trains or trucks, or were shot by border guards. In the first half of 2018 more than 792 people died attempting to reach Europe from North Africa and the Middle East.

600 children died only in the year of 2016 while trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea with their families, in a bid to escape war and violence. Those children could be the future generations, they would take the first position to fight against violence in the world since they had experienced it, they deserved and had rights to live, but now, they are nowhere to be found, the sea swallowed them alive.⁷

Congregation: My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God.

In August 2009, a boat that had lost power with 82 men, women and children aboard was drifting on the seas between the African coast and Sicily. Those on board came from Eritrea, Ethiopia and Nigeria. For 23 days, the refugees could only watch as ships passed by. Not one of them stopped. Not one of them offered help. No one informed rescue workers. One after another, the people on board died of thirst and starvation. Some threw themselves into the water. When finally, a ship came to rescue them, 77 had died. Only five survived the tragedy.

Congregation: But as for me, my prayer is to you, O Lord. At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of your steadfast love, answer me, with your faithful help.

Let us listen to the voice of a grandfather from Eritrea, who lost his 22-year-old granddaughter in the tragedy: *The meaning of human existence ends where Europe's external borders and the closed-door policies of the European Union begin. The death of our children is an execution caused by Europe's closed-door policies. My granddaughter died a very painful death, although she could have been saved. Just 22 years old, her life was taken away from her. It is not only the horrific death of my granddaughter that moves and hurts me. I grieve for every single victim who has suffered such a painful death. Every morning, noon and evening I remember the victims and bid them farewell. And still I dream that the young people will return home one day. For our family, it means we cling on to hope. That's what hurts the most. These tragedies have to do with the fear and uncertainty of many Europeans about those who look different.*

Congregation: Rescue me from sinking in the mire.

The grandfather continues: *How can it be that for 23 days our children could be seen from several ships and still not be saved? This is just callous. I don't think many people in Europe these days possess civic courage, honour or morality. But when I think of the fishing and marine personnel who sailed past the people who were screaming for help and yet did nothing,*

⁷ Source : <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugee-crisis-600-children-dead-mediterranean-2016-save-the-children-un-a7342131.html>

because they feared for their own livelihoods, I have absolutely no sympathy ... This new dimension of indifference towards people is more dangerous than hate. If you hate someone, then at least you recognize they exist, that they are a thorn in your side. If you are completely indifferent to someone, then you don't even recognize they exist. This is dangerous, and indeed for all the continents of the world.

Congregation: *Let me be delivered from my enemies and from the deep waters.*

The grandfather from Eritrea offers us some advice: *Therefore, we need to be clear, we who believe in human rights and humanity - whether we are Africans, Americans, Asians, Australians or Europeans - that each of us has the obligation to make known to the world the full extent of the tragedies in the Mediterranean. Those who do not condemn this act today, will not be able to look forward to a Europe fit for human beings tomorrow. The people who in the name of Europe are willing to accept the deaths of so many people, are those who betray Europe.*

Congregation: *Do not let the flood sweep over me, or the deep swallow me up, or the pit close its mouth over me.*

At the end, the man from Eritrea does not forget those who tried to help: *I cannot overlook the positive example of some Europeans, such as the Italian lawyer and his assistant, and the German organizations, such as borderline-europe, who have continually accompanied us through these hard and painful times.*

Congregation: *Answer me, O Lord, for your steadfast love is good; according to your abundant mercy, turn to me. Do not hide your face from your servant, for I am in distress – make haste to answer me.*

The fact that so many ships passed by this and other refugee boats, is not only because of the indifference of the ships' crews. Some rescuers were taken to court and threatened with punishment because they were alleged to have illegally brought to land those who had been stranded on the sea. Even Germany and other European Union countries refuse to help. They are not prepared to accept the survivors from the ships' crews. They are also acting in our name. We're in the same boat as them if rescue is denied.

Congregation: *Draw near to me, redeem me. O God, protect me.*

And we pray to God:

Let us not give in to the temptation that we cannot achieve anything with our modest efforts. Help us to overcome our indifference. Let us do what we are able to do. We can pray. We can hold our intercessions. We can open our mouths for the dumb. We can do something to make sure that the dead are not forgotten. We can support those on the spot who are trying to help the refugees. We can work to ensure that refugees are welcomed into our churches. We can work to ensure that our governments set up admission programmes for refugees and take effective measures to rescue people stranded on the sea. O God, protect us. Amen.

(Slightly revised version of a psalm to mark the day of prayer and remembrance of those who have died at the borders of Europe on 26 November 2011, in the Ev. Holy Cross Church, Berlin Kreuzberg. The italicized text from the families of the victims was provided by Pro Asyl.)



One of the victims who died in the river that marks the border was the wife of Mr K. It was only a DNA test that after a year of hopes and fears provided the sombre certainty that Ms K had not survived the journey to reach her husband.

Song from The United Methodist hymnal # 303

CHRIST'S GRACIOUS LIFE

303

The Day of Resurrection

1. The day of res - ur - rec - tion! Earth, tell it out a - broad;
2. Our hearts be pure from e - vil, that we may see a - right
3. Now let the heavens be joy - ful! Let earth the song be - gin!

the pass - o - ver of glad - ness, the pass - o - ver of God.
the Lord in rays e - ter - nal of res - ur - rec - tion light;
Let the round world keep triumph, and all that is there - in!

From death to life e - ter - nal, from earth un - to the sky,
and lis - tening to his ac - cents, may hear, so calm and plain,
Let all things seen and un - seen their notes in glad - ness blend,

our Christ hath brought us o - ver, with hymns of vic - to - ry.
his own "All hail!" and, hear - ing, may raise the vic - tor strain.
for Christ the Lord hath ris - en, our joy that hath no end.

WORDS: John of Damascus; trans. by John Mason Neale, 1862
MUSIC: Henry T. Smart, 1835

LANCASHIRE
76.76 D

What we can do

The first step is always to say what is happening and to reflect on it with others. Small groups can work together to collect information and reflect on how to be better informed about the situation.

We can transform our Christian communities into positive voices about migrants and refugees, enabling their stories to be told and reconstruct future hope to the broken hearted.

Reading the Bible helps! There are many stories in it that are related to migration; it's good to know that the movement of people has always been there. God is a God on the move whom we can meet in the stranger.

Groups involved in "One World" work, and partnership groups that support projects, can exchange experiences with those involved in migration and refugee issues.

We can support charities and NGOs working for peace and reconciliation in countries in ruins of wars and persecution of ethnic and religious minorities.

We can write to Members of the European Parliament, and invite them for a discussion.

The situation in North Africa and the results of the externalization of EU borders, is affecting all of us very directly. Therefore, we can act in all kinds of practical ways to help people start on the road towards their vision, learning from them and helping them utilise their own resources, talents and abilities.

There are many church pronouncements and statements. It makes sense to fetch them out and to exchange views about them together.

If you don't know the situation facing refugees in your own church or church district join together to do some research. Open days and mutual invitations help to build bridges. Inviting refugees and giving them an opportunity to speak heals our own society.

What can we do? Suggestion

Extend our mission work if possible outside Europe across origin and transit countries of migrants and refugees routes with home churches or faith based organizations creating awareness of the fatalities and inviting them to join our intercession ceremony.

In 2011, more than 55,000 people were detained in the Greek-Turkish border region, having previously crossed the Evros border river. On the Greek side, between 80 and 90 corpses are found each year.



Further information and resources

- Amnesty International: www.amnesty.org
- Borderline Europe: <http://www.borderline-europe.de>
- Asyl in der Kirche: www.kirchenasyl.de
- Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), experiences at the external border of the EU: <http://www.ekd.de/bevollmaechtigter/newsletter/63227.html>
- Missing Migrants, International Organisation for Migration, <http://missingmigrants.iom.int/mediterranean>
- See introductions to the Bible and Refugees by Paula Gooder of the Bible Society in England <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/articles-about-the-bible/what-does-the-bible-say-about-refugees/>
- United Against Racism: http://www.unitedagainstracism.org/campaigns/the-fatal-realities-of-fortress-europe/#_9
- BBC : <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-43167699>
- Consequences of sealing of the external borders of EU: <https://www.proasyl.de/thema/eu-asylpolitik/>
- Migrants deaths: <http://fortresseurope.blogspot.be/>
- UNHCR concern about migrants: <http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2017/8/599ec5024/europe-refugee-migrant-arrivals-fall-reports-abuses-deaths-persist.html>
- A Slavery Video published by CNN in Libya: <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/11/14/africa/libya-migrant-auctions/index.html>
- Church Office of the Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD) - Kein Raum in der Herberge Europa? Zur Menschenrechtslage an den Außengrenzen der Europäischen Union, Materialheft für einen Gottesdienst zum Tag der Menschenrechte am 10. Dezember 2010, Hannover 2010 [No room at the European inn? The human rights situation at the external borders of the European Union. (in German): http://www.ekd.de/download/tag_menschenrechte_2010.pdf
- The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church supporting the Humanitarian visa in response to the refugees crisis in Europe: https://www.kotimaa24.fi/artikkeli/arkkipiispa-huolissaan-kovenevasta-pakolaispolitiikasta-se-mita-on-hiljaisesti-tapahtumassa-pel/?katselukoodi=d6304b9d7536069abb578d1eaf9a0cf7f5e9e9b2584e406429a6fdd80f95f0cc#.V-E8BE_MIBU.facebook
- <https://evl.fi/uutishuone/artikkelit/-/a/22407026/Piispat+Kalliala+ja+Vikstr%c3%b6m+kehottavat+harkitsemaan+v%c3%a4liaikaisten+oleskeluupien+k%c3%a4ytt%c3%b6%c3%b6nottoa>
- UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a02d9346.html>
- <https://www.quora.com/How-is-a-countrys-border-determined-How-is-the-border-made-official-and-accepted-globally>

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To remember those who died at the border, their relatives and supporters inaugurated this small fountain in the village of Provatonas in the Evros region, Greece, in August 2011



Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate;
only love can do that. <<Martin Luther King, Jr>>.
When fear knocks, let Faith answer the door. <<Robin Roberts>>