

REFUGEE EVENSONG

June 11, 2015

In Celebration of



ORDER OF SERVICE

Welcome

The Rev. Rob Boulter

Singing Bell and Moment of Silence

Please stand as you are able.

Opening Meditation

Wayfaring Stranger

arr. John M. Dye

Opening Responses

Leader 1

God of all, where are your children?

ALL

Let us welcome God's children who are far from home.

Leader 1

God of all, why is there crying?

ALL

Let us hear the cries of refugees and respond with love.

Leader 1

God of all, who is praying?

ALL:

Let us pray with the families that are broken apart, asking for comfort and for justice.

Please be seated.

Presider

Leaving Home

Reader 1

In 1991 civil war erupted in Somalia. Our beautiful coastal town of Kismay became a battlefield, and we were forced to leave. The journey was full of horror, like families who were left along the road because they were too exhausted to go on. We reached the Dadaab camp in Kenya and registered with the UN refugee agency UNHCR – a milestone for all refugees because the ration card it provided entitled us to food, shelter, water and healthcare. But we did not realize that the camp would become our permanent home.

Reader 2

I am a 61 year old widow and mother of three children. In June 1994, my husband, our three teenaged children, and I left Rwanda to take refuge in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) during the height of the massacres. We settled in a refugee camp in the Uvira territory, protected by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In 1995, our oldest son left us to live with a family friend in Senegal. His visa was financed by the Boy Scouts. Thank you to them.

Leader 1

Close your eyes for a minute and imagine that you are being forced to leave your home ...
You don't know if you will ever be able to come back ...
Perhaps you are worried about other members of your family.
What is happening to them?
Will you see them again?
You are leaving on foot so you can't take much with you.
What would you take?

Song 56*A Desire Fills Our Being*

Taizé

Presider*Journey***Reader 1**

Throughout my primary education in the camp, I rarely heard about my home country. Most of my history classes were about Kenya and East Africa, Somalia was a side note. I learnt almost nothing about my people. We memorized the Kenyan national anthem. I forgot that of my motherland. The primary school had no books or paper use. We had class under a tree. Many were the days when we missed classes due to heavy rains that the tree did not shield us from. I was one of the few lucky ones able to continue my studies at the high school where the walls of the congested classrooms were made of flattened metal recycled from USAID oil tins. Those young boys who didn't get the chance to go to high school were left stranded. Having nothing to do, most of them started abusing drugs. Many joined the militia fighting back home.

Reader 2

In 1996, the Rwandan army attacked the refugee camps. Tied together and crawling on our bellies, my husband, our two children and I were able to escape. But as the Rwandan soldiers pursued us, our second son got separated from us. After four days of walking under the bombs and rifle shots, we were sick from fatigue and dehydration. We stayed in the forest to survive. After three months we finally found a small village, but the military continued to torture and rape all of us in the village. In 1998 our daughter fell into a coma for four days. On regaining consciousness, she had lost all functional abilities. We couldn't find any medical assistance in the war zone. After seven years of that hell, my husband was killed. My handicapped daughter and I were left in the DRC on our own. However, God sent us an agent from a human rights organization who helped us contact our friend in Senegal. In early 2004, I was reunited in Senegal with my first son and learned that my second son was alive in England. A year and a half later, my daughter and I received asylum in Senegal but my older son was refused. We asked for the reunification of our family in England, but we were turned down because my younger son in England was by then an adult.

Leader 2

Think for a moment about your journey as a refugee ...
Having to escape from those who want to kill you ...
How would you get out of the country without being caught?
Are you still in shock from what has happened to you?
Maybe you're starting to be frightened about what will face you when you arrive somewhere new ...

Song 32*Your Word, O Lord*

Taizé

Presider*In Exile***Leader 2**

The world is in the throes of its most serious refugee crisis since World War II, as multiple conflicts have now forcibly displaced more than 50 million people and created a rising tide of intolerance and xenophobia in many parts of the world. As of December 2013, this included 16.7 million refugees, 1.2 million asylum seekers, and 33.3 million people forced to flee within the borders of their own countries, uprooted from their homes by war, persecution or economic and political collapse. There are now nearly 4 million registered Syrian refugees, the largest refugee population under the mandate of UNHCR. Less than 1% of refugees ever have the option of third country resettlement. Of the 327,886 refugees resettled in the U.S. between 2010 and 2014, 2,877 were welcomed by Baltimore. A cruel irony of resettlement is that refugees sometimes find themselves thrust into a new life in communities that are themselves broken and suffering. This happens all too often in Baltimore.

Reader 1

More than 60 percent of the population in Dadaab is young and there is almost no work. I used to write for the student newspaper, and became an editor of a refugee youth newsletter. Under Kenyan law, refugees cannot move out of the camp, let alone access work permits. One of the biggest challenges the youth face in the camp is the restriction of movement. I hated looking for a travel document just to go outside the camp. The encampment policy crippled our potential. I respect the Kenyan government for doing its job but I feel we were in prison. In 2011, I received an international scholarship from the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia to study journalism. After spending 20 years of despair as a refugee in Kenya, I could leave to follow my dream to be a professional journalist and report on humanitarian news.

Reader 2

In late 2005, a resettlement program run by Americans came to Senegal. My daughter and I were accepted but not my son, again because "he had no asylum in Senegal." The UN told me I could apply for my son to join us once in the US. I had to choose between the health of my daughter and staying with my son in Senegal. In December 2006, my daughter and I arrived in America. The sponsor was the International Rescue Committee that sent a caseworker to welcome us at the airport of BWI. We also learned that because my son was an adult, the US would not let him rejoin us through the asylum process. Here in America my living has not been easy. My daughter's medical needs have been an obstacle to improving our life. I am alone to take care of myself and my daughter. I needed my sons around me.

Closing prayer

Leader 3

God beyond borders,
we bless you for strange places and different dreams
for the demands and diversity of a wider world
for the distance that lets us look back and re-evaluate
for new ground where broken stems can take root, grow and blossom.
We bless you for the friendship of strangers
the richness of other cultures
and the painful gift of freedom.

ALL

Blessed are you, God beyond borders.

Leader 3

But if we have overlooked the exiles in our midst,
heightened their exclusion by our indifference
given our permission for a climate of fear
and tolerated a culture of violence

ALL

**Have mercy on us,
God who takes side with justice.
Confront our prejudice
Stretch our narrowness
Sift out our laws and our lives
With the penetrating insight of your spirit,
Until generosity is our only measure. Amen.**

Song 10

In the Lord I'll be Ever Thankful

Taizé

Presider

Remarks

Benediction

All are invited for light refreshments upstairs in the Chapter Room

REFUGEE EVENSONG

MUSICIANS

:

Peter Beyer, Mindy Elledge, Gwen Spicer (flute), Noah Stone (violin), Tina Trapano

READERS

The Rev. Rob Boulter, The Rev. Charles Cloughen, Cheryl Hazel, Abner Lall, Margo Landon, John McDonnell, Enechi Modu, Leslie Norton, Bradford Peabody

LITURGY

Adapted from © Woolman House Community (Alan Paxton, Kate Marks, Craig Barrett) in *Holy Ground* (Neil Paynter & Helen Boothroyd), Published in 2005 by Wild Goose Publications, 4th Floor, Savoy House, 140 Sauchiehall St, Glasgow, G2 3DH, UK, ISBN 978-1-901557-88-6.

"God of all, where are your children?" responses adapted by Helen Boothroyd from responses from Jane Bentley, 1998. Original source of responses unknown.

"God beyond borders" responses – © Kathy Galloway, from the liturgy "Exile", *The Pattern Of Our Days*, Wild Goose Publications, 1996, ISBN 978-0-947988-76-0.

STORIES

Story 1 adapted from *Kenya-Somalia: A Refugee Story*, © IRIN 2015.

Story 2 adapted from ERICA materials.

MUSIC

"Wayfaring Stranger" from *Original Sacred Harp* © Sacred Harp Publishing Company, Inc. (Denson revision), 1936.

Taize songs

Taize: Songs for Prayer © Ateliers et Presses de Taizé (France), 1998, ISBN 1-57999-035-5.

The Woolman House Community offered hospitality to refugees in Liverpool from 1999 to 2004. They began by befriending a Kosovan family whom they met at a local church and by visiting refugees housed in high-rise flats elsewhere in Liverpool. Later they helped to set up a drop-in for refugees and began a visitors' group to befriend immigration detainees in Liverpool Prison and to act as bail sureties to obtain their release where possible. The Woolman House Community offered overnight hospitality to refugees coming to Liverpool from cities elsewhere in Britain for the interview with the Home Office on which their claim for asylum would be judged. The 'house of hospitality' was also able to provide a longer-term home for one refugee made homeless and destitute by the Home Office system. The Woolman House Community takes its name from the eighteenth century Quaker, John Woolman, a slavery abolitionist and advocate of a simple and non-violent style of life.

ERICA

Compelled by faith, compassion, and a yearning for justice, the Episcopal Refugee and Immigrant Center Alliance (ERICA) honors and ministers to the dignity and humanity of our brothers and sisters fleeing oppression, persecution, and poverty in other countries. We undertake this mission as an outreach program of the Cathedral of the Incarnation and pledge to:

- Provide immediate, practical, and material assistance to refugees, asylees, asylum seekers and other immigrants, regardless of race, religion, or language
- Partner with other civic, community, and religious groups to provide direct services such as casework, educational workshops, and referrals for legal assistance, healthcare, and housing
- Empower the refugee community with information, networks, and guidance
- Connect volunteers and civic leaders with refugees and the issues affecting their efforts to create new lives in our country
- Provide grants for family reunification to restore wholeness and community and zero-interest loans for immigration-related legal fees to smooth the journey to stability and a promising future

All of ERICA's services are free. We carry out our mission in a spirit of welcoming and Christian hospitality and with a commitment to listen, share, and respect.

ERICA
Episcopal Refugee & Immigrant Center Alliance

“Paintings of Home”

Refugee Stories in Art, Music & Word



**Celebrate hope, perseverance, dignity
and tradition!**

**Welcome refugee artists and musicians for an
evening of performance, paintings, and
captivating storytelling that explores the
meaning of HOME to refugees.**

SILENT AUCTION

SUMPTUOUS FARE

All proceeds to benefit the programs of ERICA

Tickets \$50

Sponsor an ERICA client to attend!

Purchase online—www.eric-baltimore.org

Tickets available at the door

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

