

Refugee Sunday 2022



In this resource, you will find:

- A Story of Joy: The story of Georgetown Christian Reformed Church and their sponsorship journey
- Litany for Refugee Sunday
- Statistics
- Children's Story and Activity

The Need:

War, conflicts, disasters, and violence often force families to leave behind their homes and their possessions and seek out a safe place to settle. Families leaving their homes take an immense risk, praying and hoping they will find peace and safety for their children and for themselves.

As the global number of displaced people continues to grow, there are more and more families looking for a new beginning and a chance to rebuild their lives in another country—including here in Canada.



A Quick Glance at the Global Refugee Population:

42%

of refugees are under the age of 18

26.4 million

refugees around the world have been forced to flee their homes

31%

of refugee children are enrolled in secondary education. Only 3% will go to higher education

Over 1.4 million

refugees were estimated to be in need of resettlement in 2020 but only 2.4% were actually resettled

10,500

refugees have been welcomed by churches and other sponsoring groups through the World Renew Sponsorship and Resettlement Program since World Renew signed the sponsorship agreement with the government of Canada in 1979

Refugee Sunday 2022



A Story of Joy:

Linda Deboer, a member of the Georgetown Christian Reformed Church, is at the hub of this story. It started in April 2017, when Linda received an email from her cousin in Holland whose sons were backpacking in Israel where they met an Eritrean refugee, Ambes. Linda's cousin contacted her about looking for someone to sponsor him.

Linda knew a little about sponsoring refugees, but it seemed too big.

Her son, Trevor, challenged her. "Mom," he asked, "isn't this what we have been talking about? Aren't we, as Christians, supposed to do everything we can to provide a safe place for families who are living in unsafe or unjust communities?" Like Trevor, the members of the Georgetown CRC and the local school felt compelled to help Ambes.

Ambes had an older brother, Kidane, who was also working in Israel. Kidane had escaped from forced labour in the underground mines in Eritrea. He left behind his wife and two boys, still toddlers, to find a better life for his family.

The Georgetown CRC would eventually sponsor and welcome both Ambes and Kidane to Canada, but Kidane's application was approved first, so he arrived ahead of Ambes.

Linda began the sponsorship process by contacting the World Renew Refugee Sponsorship and Resettlement team.

Excited to make resettlement a reality for the brothers, the Georgetown CRC community rallied together to raise enough money to make it possible.



The community didn't stop there. They supported the sponsorship of Kidane's wife and boys, now teenagers. And in the summer of 2021 his family was re-united! The whole community embraced them. Beaming with joy as he looked at his wife and sons, Kidane said, "Praise God. Praise God that my family is in Canada."

It's not an easy journey. Kidane, his wife and children are taking language classes and learning English. The cold Canadian weather was new for them. There is a great deal to learn. But they feel safe. They feel welcomed and they are eagerly trying new foods, making new friends and seizing every opportunity to learn how to build a life in Canada.

Please pray for displaced families around the world, that they will find the peace and safety they seek. Pray too, for families hoping to rebuild their lives in a new country that God will open doors so they will find sponsors, their applications will be approved, and the sponsorship process will go smoothly. Thank you for your prayers and your gifts that help bring hope to children, women and men as they journey to rebuild their lives in Canada.



Refugee Sunday 2022

Litany for Refugee Sunday:

Reader 1: Open our hearts, oh Lord. Prepare us for worship.

Reader 2: "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it." (Hebrews 13: 2)

Reader 1: We pray for families who have fled in fear
Seeking a safe place, a place where peace embraces the land
Where there is hope for the future.

Congregation: Remind us, oh Lord, to pray. Remind us of the children, women, and men who have fled in search of safety. Be with them.

Reader 1: Make us aware, oh Lord, of injustice. May we be people of mercy and grace.

Reader 2: "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 invited me in." (Matthew 25: 35)

Congregation: Teach us, oh Lord, to be people of hospitality. Guide us to act when we see people in need. Help us to reflect your love in practical acts of kindness.

Reader 1: Open our eyes, Lord. Help us see your image in the faces of those in need of hope and opportunity.

Reader 2: "This is what the Lord Almighty said: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor.'" (Zechariah 7: 9-10)

Congregation: Make us impatient, Lord God, for justice. Help us to stand with the widow, the orphan. Help us to stand with the newcomers and those who have been displaced.

Reader 1: Open our ears, Lord Jesus. Help us to hear the stories of the displaced, the frightened, and the lonely.

Reader 2: "Do not oppress a foreigner, you yourselves know how it feels to be foreigners, for you were foreigners in Egypt." (Exodus 23: 9)

Congregation: Give us wisdom, oh Lord, to understand the struggles and challenges of new Canadians. Help us to welcome them in our homes and into our communities.

All: "Lead us to find rest and comfort in you, oh Lord, and in you alone. For those who hope upon the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint." (Isaiah 40: 31)



Refugee Sunday 2022

Children's Corner:

You will need a pot of small stones, poster paint and paint brushes. Make sure you have enough stones in the pot for each child.

Story:

Hana had just turned 5. She was a big girl. Much, much bigger than her baby brother, Rashid. He was still a baby, he had just learned how to walk! She loved to follow him around the house, choosing toys and picking him up again when he plunked down on his bum. Rashid didn't have a care in the world. He didn't hear the whispers late into the night that woke Hana. He didn't know that his mom and dad spoke in heated whispers in the back room. He didn't know that his mother was putting food and clothing and diapers into a backpack, even though they hadn't left their house for many weeks.

Hana knew something was going on. She heard them talk about leaving and packing, saying goodbye to their neighbours and Hana's uncles. She often woke to the terrifying sound of bombs and guns.

And then, in the middle of the night, her mother woke her and whispered, "Hana, get up. We need to go."

Hana didn't understand everything, but she knew they were leaving their home. She didn't know how long they would be gone, but she thought it might be a very, very long time.

As Hana stumbled down the lane, she dipped down and picked up one small pebble from the road. She slipped it into her pocket to remind her of home.

Hana was right. She didn't return home. When she turned 6 she rubbed the stone, remembering the house in her homeland. When she turned 7, she showed the pebble to Rashid and told him stories of the garden she tended with her grandmother. When she turned 8, she put the stone in her pocket as they boarded a huge airplane. Her mother told her they were going to their new home in a country called Canada! She was excited and just a little bit scared. She held the stone tight as the plane began to soar.

When Hana turned 9, she showed the stone to the people who helped her family to come to Canada; her mom called them their sponsors, but to Hana they were more like aunts and uncles. She said to them, "I kept this stone to remind me of home, but now Canada is my home."

Refugee Sunday 2022



Activity:

What are some things that might surprise Hana about Canada? (let the kids answer: everyone speaks English, it's cold, the cars drive fast)

I have a pot of stones! Would you like to paint one? (let the children choose a stone)

You can keep your stone to help you remember the story of Hana and children like her who have had to leave their homes because of war, persecution, or violence.

You can put your stone in a safe place. When you take it out again, take time to pray for children like Hana who have just come to a new country where everything is so different.

