**World Refugee Day** – Heal, Learn, Shine

**Resources for worship and prayer**

© **Rev Anne Hewitt, Executive Director, Churches Together SA**

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**Psalm 133 &**

**Prayer of Song of Praise**

A song of praise, we sing to you, O God!
How wonderful it is, how pleasant,
for God's people to live together in harmony!

Your love flows over us, covering our lives with love and care,

enriching our relationships with each other, your people!

Like fresh dew on parched soil,

You refresh our hearts each day in unexpected ways.

As we open our eyes to all your people, let our love flow too,

covering the broken and fearful souls,

enriching the lives of those who have lost family

and refreshing the wounded and weeping hearts.

For that is where you have promised your blessing.

Precious life for all, the singers and the sorrowing,

together as one family in a love that never ends.

**2 Corinthians 6:1-13 &**

**Confession of Idealists**

In our work together with you, O God,

We do not always live with your grace.

We find fault and criticise.

We create obstacles that inhibit progress.

We do not honour the other

And seek relationship with those who think like us.

We are sorry, God of Love.

When others have endured troubles, hardships and difficulties,

we have set up policies that create a structure that entraps them.

Our system of ‘care’ has become a weapon of hurt.

Our offer of ‘help’ has diminished their ability to respond.

Our place of ‘refuge’ has resembled a gaol.

We are sorry, God of Justice

When they are volunteering to build community,

We have closed our hearts to their warmth.

With gentle grace, and honour of our ways,

they have tried to learn how they may live to suit our society.

Yet, we have ignored their effort by dismissing it as a ruse.

We are sorry, God of Peace.

*Silent prayer*

Bring us as a nation to the awareness of the whole body of Christ.

Lift the veil from our eyes to see woundedness and loss.

Speak truth through our actions to heal the tear in the fabric of peace.

Bind us to your justice to bring forth the reality of ‘finding home’,

a refuge to the refugee,

solace to your broken people with their aching hearts.

Open our hearts wide, God of Love.

**Psalm 9:9-20 &**

**Prayer of Assurance** **& Adoration**

**Leader:** Please pray with me

**L:** The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed,
    a place of safety in times of trouble.

**All:** Those who know you, Lord, will trust you;
    you do not abandon anyone who comes to you.

**L:** Sing praise to the Lord, whose realm has no bounds!
    Tell every nation what God has done!

**All:** God remembers those who suffer;
    God does not forget their cry.

**L:** Be compassionate to you people, O Lord!

**All:** See their sufferings and hear their cries!

**L:** The needy will not always be neglected;

**All:** The hope of the poor will not be crushed forever.

**All:** We praise you, Lord!

We rejoice because you save us.

You hear the cries of your people, and fill them with hope

We stand before all people and praise you, Giver of Hope.

**Reflection 1 Samuel 17:(1a,4-11, 19-23), 32-49**

David responded to God’s call by being himself. Humble in his role as shepherd, he delivered the supplies and visited his brothers. He listened, learnt from both sides, considered his ability and experience, and responded. He did not think of being a hero. Merely, using his skills learnt in his daily life, to confront an extraordinary experience. These ‘smooth stones’ of normality sat easily with him. Setting aside the ‘amour’ that was not of his way, he followed his calling, the ‘smooth stones’ of learned wisdom. It enabled him to do something extraordinary.

***Call*** - David knew and took up his staff -

***Listen*** – David listened and understood the situation

***Learn*** – He learned from the past, and embedded it in the present

***Consider*** – David considered, in faith, and found courage in the moment

***Respond*** – David took up his staff and five smooth stones of wisdom

And the ‘Goliath’ was felled by smooth stones.

As we enter into Refugee Week, we are reminded of the ordinary folk, who when faced with the Goliath of war, injustice, cruelty, and oppression, fled with the life experiences they had, to build a future with their ‘smooth stones’ of wisdom – who they are, what they have learnt, how they can create a better ‘home’, and their hope that they can offer peace and new beginnings in this tangled world.

May our Goliath of idealism be decimated by the wisdom of justice.

May the practice of God’s love grow stronger than policies that hurt and demean people.

May God’s Way help us see clearly our steppingstones towards peace.

**Prayer**

(A Hand prayer, beginning with the thumb, holding each finger as you pray each Smooth Stone)

You, God of all, call each of us as individuals,

knowing us better than we know ourselves.

*Silent prayer of consideration*

**5 Smooth Stones**

***Call*** – what is my call?

***Listen*** – What have I heard from the whole situation?

***Learn*** – What have I understood and embedded in my life?

***Consider*** – How does my faith help me find courage in the moment?

***Respond* –** Howthen shall I live?

Where then, can we use our ‘smooth stones of wisdom’ that are part of our living and being, to bring about your realm of love and family, here in this time, O God?

*Silent prayer*

All that we are, we offer to you now…

All that we have learnt, please use it now…

All that we can do to further your justice and kindness, engage us now…

Help us to hear your call, and understand where we too, can use our five smooth stones of wisdom, the simple everyday way we live, to bring about change and new beginnings for all in these extraordinary times.

**Mark 4:35-41 &**

**Prayer of Intercession**

God of just and loving grace,

We remember those on boat journeys across stormy waters,

leaving all that is recognized and entering the unknown.

We pray for those who have no option but flight,

as staying led to further unimaginable horror, hardship or death.

We pray for their healing from fear and flight,

for their trauma and unfathomable losses.

*Silent prayer*

We pray for those who have landed in this promising land.

In their terror and their stormy, dangerous sailing, they found no peace.

We acknowledge their need for recovery and healing,

finding ‘home’ in an unfamiliar place.

We acknowledge the cool reception and complicated policies that

add another layer of hurt and confusion,

raising fears further and creating a cycle of confusion and anxiety.

Draw this community to listen to their needs

and respond with our abilities that will assist healing and positive outcomes.

We come to you, God of all, to know your wisdom for our action.

Let us hear your calling to us.

Open our ears to the voices of those affected.

Increase our understanding of their trauma and our response

Raise before us the skills we have to serve these neighbours

and the strength to act with compassion and purpose;

So that we bring grace to the space wherever we meet

and your love with the care that we offer.

May your peace enfold their traumatic lives so that it may, at last, be still.

Grace and peace,

Rev Anne Hewitt