

# Brunswick Ecumenical Prayer Vigil

*Come together to pray in lament and hope  
for refugees on the 10th anniversary of  
Australia's offshore processing policy*

EVERYONE IS

**WELCOME**

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2023  
260 Sydney Rd. Brunswick

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with the congregations of the  
Brunswick Baptist Church  
Brunswick and Moreland Catholic Mission  
Brunswick Uniting Church  
Christ Church Anglican Parish  
Salvation Army Brunswick Corps

## INTRODUCTION and ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,  
be with you all.

**And also with you**

Welcome...

We acknowledge and respect  
the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin nation,  
the traditional custodians of this land  
since time immemorial.

We are learning that the land  
is not ours to own, but to look after;  
and that if we listen,  
we may hear in it the calling of the eternal Spirit.

**Responding to this call, we commit ourselves  
to work for justice, reconciliation,  
and care of the earth.**

This month refugee Mohammad (not his real name) received a permanent protection visa to live in Australia. This comes after 10 years of living with uncertainty in detention, on the streets, and finally in his own home, under various temporary visas. His primary emotion on receiving his permanent visa was sadness. In those ten years both his parents have died in his homeland. "Why now?" he asks, "after all this time, when it is too late for me to see my parents?"


We gather today to mark 10 years of Australia's offshore processing policy. While no refugees now remain on Nauru and there are signs of hope for change, we lament the ongoing suffering of so many and pray for healing and renewal. May God's kingdom of justice and peace come, and God's loving will be done here on earth as in heaven.

## BIBLE READINGS

Sung refrain:

**8**                      **HOW BLESSED ARE YOU**

**Chorale**                      *p*



How blessed are you who are poor;                      the  
King-dom of God is yours, how blessed are you who are  
poor;                      the King - dom of God is yours. ——— How

*(Fine)*

### Leviticus 19:33–34

“When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do them wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love them as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

All sing:

**How blessed are you who are poor;  
the Kingdom of God is yours.**

### Psalms 31:1-5, 24

In you, O Lord, do I take refuge;  
let me never be put to shame;  
in your righteousness deliver me!  
Incline your ear to me;  
rescue me speedily!  
Be a rock of refuge for me,  
a strong fortress to save me!

For you are my rock and my fortress;  
and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me;

you take me out of the net they have hidden for me,  
for you are my refuge.

Into your hand I commit my spirit;  
you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.

Be strong, and let your heart take courage,  
all you who wait for the Lord!

All sing:

**How blessed are you who are poor;  
the Kingdom of God is yours.**

### Matthew 25:31–46

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.’”

All sing:

**How blessed are you who are poor;  
the Kingdom of God is yours.**



# THE LAMENT

Sung refrain:

## *Ostinato Chorale*

O Lord hear my pray'r, O Lord hear my pray'r:  
when I call an - swer me. O Lord hear my pray'r, O  
Lord hear my pray'r. Come and lis - ten to me. O

This may be sung as a response to spoken prayers

From the Taizé Community (1991)  
*Psalm 102: 1,2*

Words and music by permission Ateliers et Presses de Taizé Ltd

*Leader* Hear our cries of frustration, guilt, and anger, O God  
**As the voices of asylum seekers are silenced by fear  
and the pursuit of power**

## *Voices of lament*

- 1 Hear the desperation of the family trying to pull its remnants together after so many have been murdered
- 2 Hear the heartbeat of the man escaping an assassin's bullet
- 3 Hear the cries of a woman escaping politically motivated sexual violence
- 4 Hear the frantic footsteps of the child whose dying parents have told her to flee
- 1 Hear the murmurs of the mother whose memories damage her each time they occur
- 2 Hear the arguments of desperate people as their boat slowly sinks

*Pause*

Leader     Hear our cries of frustration, guilt, and anger, O God  
**As the voices of asylum seekers are silenced by fear  
and the pursuit of power**

All sing:

***O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer: when I call answer me.  
O Lord hear my prayer, our Lord hear my prayer. Come and listen to me.***

*Voices of lament*

- 3     Listen as we lament the complexity of finding a humane solution  
4     Listen as we weep in frustration at our inability  
      to rouse our community to help asylum seekers  
1     Listen as we murmur of our own timidity in speaking  
      for those on the run from persecution  
2     Listen as we confess that we have willingly forgotten when  
      we ourselves fled to Australia to find safety and  
      have refused to help those now in the same position  
3     Listen to us laughing at parties and cafes as we dismiss  
      the legitimacy of asylum seekers.  
      Remind us of the real plight of those fleeing across borders

*Pause*

Leader     Hear our cries of frustration, guilt, and anger, O God  
**As the voices of asylum seekers are silenced by fear  
and the pursuit of power**

All sing:

***O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer: when I call answer me.  
O Lord hear my prayer, our Lord hear my prayer. Come and listen to me.***

*Voices of lament*

- 4     We hear few voices of politicians who put the safety  
      of asylum seekers first; who speak of protection and welcome  
      over fear and strong borders. Call more voices forth, O God  
1     We hear few voices of compassion on the radio waves.  
      Call more voices forth, O God

- 2 There are no voices to speak of the people displaced  
by the wars we started. Call them forth, O God
- 3 We hear no strong international voices for a global strategy  
on asylum seekers. Call them forth, O God
- 4 The voices that speak for those desperate people on the sea are  
too quiet in our community and work places. Call them forth, O God

*Pause*

Leader Hear our cries of frustration, guilt, and anger, O God  
**As the voices of asylum seekers are silenced by fear  
and the pursuit of power**

All sing:

***O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer: when I call answer me.  
O Lord hear my prayer, our Lord hear my prayer. Come and listen to me.***

*Voices of lament*

- 1 Hear our cries in despair – we cannot find our way home from here!  
2 We don't know how to solves this  
3 We don't know how to advocate  
4 We don't know how to bring change

- 1 Hear our cries in confusion as the issue is complex,  
the solutions are slow and the answers are never simple  
2 The debate is loud and vicious as people seek to score points  
for political power while locking up  
and compounding damage on vulnerable people  
3 Why can we not see the public leaders who have compassion?  
4 Why can we not find the public dreamers of justice?  
1 Why can we not hear the public proclaimers of hope?

- 2 Hear our cries in despair at the powerlessness we feel,  
3 To make the story turn out right  
4 To overturn the actions done in our name  
1 To inspire our neighbourhoods to new attitudes  
2 To infect the public discourse with grace

*Pause*

All sing:

***O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer: when I call answer me.***

***O Lord hear my prayer, our Lord hear my prayer. Come and listen to me.***

## CONFESSION

God of justice,

**we confess to you**

**that we have not loved you with our whole heart,**

**and we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.**

We have hoarded our good things.

We have closed our eyes to the poor at our gate.

Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

We have loved only those who love us.

We have turned away from the those who are denied justice.

Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

We have been hungry for power and possessions.

We have lost our appetite for justice.

Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy**

We have sung of peace when there is no peace.

We have not cried out for those are silenced in their suffering.

Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

We are sorry for all our sins,

**and we ask you to forgive us**

**through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*The leader says*

With forgiveness comes freedom

to make different choices:

to do justice,

to love kindness,

to walk humbly with God.

Receive the gift of forgiveness and life,

and be merciful to others,

just as God has been merciful to us,

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



## STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT: WELCOMING THE STRANGER

*Everyone:*

**A core value of my faith is to welcome the stranger, the refugee, the internally displaced, the other. I shall treat them as I would like to be treated. I will challenge others, even leaders in my faith community, to do the same.**

**Together with faith leaders, faith-based organisations and communities of conscience around the world, I affirm:**

**I will welcome the stranger.**

*Leader:*

My faith teaches that compassion, mercy, love and hospitality are for everyone: the native born and the foreign born, the member of my community and the newcomer.

I will remember and remind members of my community that we are all considered “strangers” somewhere, that we should treat the stranger to our community as we would like to be treated, and challenge intolerance.

I will remember and remind others in my community that no one leaves his or her homeland without a reason: some flee because of persecution, violence or exploitation; others due to natural disaster; yet others out of love to provide better lives for their families.

I recognise that all persons are entitled to dignity and respect as human beings. All those in my country, including the stranger, are subject to its laws, and none should be subject to hostility or discrimination.

I acknowledge that welcoming the stranger sometimes takes courage, but the joys and the hopes of doing so outweigh the risks and the challenges. I will support others who exercise courage in welcoming the stranger.

I will offer the stranger hospitality, for this brings blessings upon the community, upon my family, upon the stranger and upon me.

I will respect and honour the reality that the stranger may be of a different faith or hold beliefs different from mine or other members of my community.

I will respect the right of the stranger to practice their own faith freely.  
I will seek to create space where they can freely worship.

I will speak of my own faith without demeaning or ridiculing the faith of others.

I will build bridges between the stranger and myself.  
Through my example, I will encourage others to do the same.

I will make an effort not only to welcome the stranger, but also to listen to them deeply, and to promote understanding and welcome in my community.

I will speak out for social justice for the stranger,  
just as I do for other members of my community.

Where I see hostility towards the stranger in my community,  
whether through words or deeds, I will not ignore it,  
but will instead endeavour to establish a dialogue and facilitate peace.

I will not keep silent when I see others, even leaders in my faith community,  
speaking ill of strangers, judging them without coming to know them,  
or when I see them being excluded, wronged or oppressed.

I will encourage my faith community to work with other faith communities  
and faith-based organisations to find better ways to assist the stranger.

*Everyone:*

**I will welcome the stranger.**

## SILENCE/REFLECTION

All Sing:

***Ubi caritas, et amor.***

***Ubi caritas, Deus ibi est.***

(Where charity and love are found, God is there.)

## Ostinato Response

**A** *Lento*

U - bi ca - ri - tas et a - mor,

**B**

U - bi ca - ri - tas De - us i - bi est.

## THE WORD OF HOPE (Revelation 21:1, 3–5)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth;  
for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away,  
and the sea was no more.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

‘See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them;

he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away.’

And the one who was seated on the throne said,

‘See, I am making all things new.’

## PASSING THE PEACE

The Peace of Christ be always with you.

**And also with you.**

*All share a sign of peace with one another.*

Go in peace to seek the Kingdom and God’s righteousness.

And may God bless you,

the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

In the name of Christ.

**Amen**