**TOPICS FOR PRAYER – REFUGEE WEEK**

* In 2022, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that the number of people displaced by war, persecution and natural disasters had passed 100 million for the first time**. Pray for an end to conflict and persecution, particularly for those who have had to leave their homes behind, in particular the most vulnerable amongst them.**
* Many refugees embark on long and dangerous journeys in the search for safety, and the opportunity to build a new life in a peaceful country. Sadly, thousands of refugees never make it, or are caught up in the hands of traffickers and people smugglers. **Pray that governments around the world will recognise the need to offer safe routes to safe homes in order that refugees might find sanctuary.**
* The United Kingdom and Ireland benefits every day from the contribution of asylum seekers and refugees who live amongst us. Spend some time thanking God for their gifts, talents and courage. **Pray that national leaders will work together with one another across borders to find solutions to help the most vulnerable.**
* Pray for the [*Lift The Ban*](https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/supporting-refugees/lift-ban) campaign, supported by the UKI Territory, that is calling on the government to give asylum seekers the opportunity to work. **Pray that ministers will listen to the testimonies of those who are desperate to contribute but are often left in limbo for many years, and that they *will* act.**
* Several corps in the territory are helping refugees through the Community Sponsorship Scheme. This allows corps volunteers to help some of the most vulnerable refugees in the world, by sponsoring them to be brought from refugee camps and be resettled in their communities. **Pray particularly for Birmingham, Preston, Thirsk, Minster, and Southend who are all currently navigating the Community Sponsorship journey.**
* The Salvation Army in the UK and Ireland has a membership increasingly made up of those from a refugee background. This recognises that refugees are our brothers and sisters who we worship and take action together. **Thank God for the gift of newcomers to our corps and centres. Pray that we will listen to and learn from one another, and develop the kind of loving, welcoming communities that God calls us to be.**
* A large number of corps and centres work closely and share their lives with those who are seeking refugee status. Many of these individuals and families live on a tiny living allowance, in properties that are not fit for purpose, and with great uncertainty about their future. Unaccompanied child asylum seekers are also increasingly being supported by our specialist centres. **Pray for the many corps and centres who regularly offer hospitality and love to those in the asylum system.**
* In the wake of the Ukraine crisis, people across the UK and Ireland opened their hearts and homes to people needing sanctuary. As of May 2023, 173,500 people had been welcomed to the UK through the Ukraine Scheme, and over 73,000 Ukrainians welcomed in the Republic of Ireland. This shows that people across the British Isles are full of compassion for refugees. **Thank God for this generosity of spirit and that this may continue to grow and overflow in our communities.**
* There are a number of corps and centres across the territory who have pioneered *Welcome Hubs* where refugees can come to meet together, access services and training. These have been centres of hope for many, and beautiful stories of community welcome and belonging have emerged as a result. **Pray for corps involved in projects like this, and that community welcome of refugees and asylum seekers will continue to grow and develop as the need grows.** **Pray particularly for the expressions at Sutton, Cambridge Heath, Scarborough, Bromley, Sittingbourne and Thornton Heath.**
* The Homeless Services Unit and Employment Plus teams across the country are increasingly working and journeying with refugees and asylum seekers. **Pray for all the E+ team members across the territory and in particular the HSU teams at Barrack Street, George Williams House, Cardiff and Springfield Lodge.**