

Prayers for the Arriving Children and Families in Crisis:

The Apostle Paul, in his poetic vision painting of how our faith communities could be in Ephesians, Chapter 3, said God's plan for deep love and wide warmth put him on his knees in prayer. Let us join him in that as we seek for a love that full & broad to be communicated from our homeland to the arriving children and their families:

God, whose spirit migrated over the waters of chaos before creation to bring it beauty and order, we remember the fleeing children and their families here today because of those conversations that have taken place in the hush of the night in Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and elsewhere among families aching for an exit from extortion, violence, murders, and poverty. We gather because of wrenching decisions to board the beast for transit, to corral coy and costly coyotes and journey north—not for what can be gotten...but because staying safe in untenable conditions is most often no longer even an option. We gather because the children are gathered right now, ages two and ten and teens--on trails and in teams and with trauma and near tragedy—TRYING to leave terrors behind and find safety among us.

COMFORT them, Lord! When many in our land have said the solution to their pain is to expedite their removal more quickly—GIVE OUR GOVERNMENT AND ALL LEADERS FAR MORE COMPASSIONATE RESPONSES. When busloads have been denied access points for care by cars full who have come in to push them back with their shouts—BE THAT STILL, SMALL VOICE THAT BUILDS TO AN EVER PRESENT ROAR FOR JUSTICE AND WELCOME! When families on all sides of borders are searching for hope to be reunited and find help in this world where you gave us more than enough to share—MAY THE STRENGTH OF YOUR HOLY SPIRIT BE WHAT IS FOUND AND FELT—IN EACH PERSON AND IN OUR POLICIES.

And when souls of the children feel like parched plants from their real desert wanderings—God, COME HOME TO THEIR HEARTS AND OURS, AND GIVE THEM ROOTS DEEP IN THE SOIL OF GOD'S MARVELOUS LOVE UNTIL WE ALL CAN ACT KNOWING AND TRUSTING JUST HOW DEEP AND HOW WIDE YOUR LOVE REALLY IS. You have brought us here to hear their cries. Make our hearts open now, and give us the power to understand and to respond. AMEN.

(Written by Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Director, Refugee & Immigration Ministries,
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