



(Note: Butterfly image from Campaign to Shut Down Berks Coalition: <https://paimmigrant.org/campaign-to-shut-down-berks/>)

Prayers for Migrant Children and Families in Detention and Crisis

God, as we remember the harrowing escapes from Pharaoh of Moses and the Hebrew families, from Herod by Jesus' family, and so many more in our scriptures, link our minds in understanding, open our hearts to compassion, and direct our feet in action for children and mothers detained. Change their captivity to liberty, replace their fear with fortitude, and turn their suffering now in custody into a hopefulness for humane and free community centered care. AMEN.



Loving and Gracious God, as we live in and celebrate the vast independence in our nation, we know that you are watching over mothers and their children who are not yet free. We pray that you will guide our ICE and elected officials to end the practice of detaining families, and instead support alternatives to detention. Give us, and our brothers and sisters in detention, the resilience and strength necessary to overcome this immoral act. Guide us in leading all of your people to practice loving kindness. AMEN.



Prayer for Migrant Children & 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 posture as we seek a love that full & broad to be communicated from our homeland to arriving migrant 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 communities have been denied access points for care and instead been met with policies that push them back across borders, be that still, small voice that builds to an ever present roar for justice and welcome; heard the

in desert, resounding among the tent cities waiting for safety, felt through cold, metal detention bars and beds. 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 and warmth of your Holy Spirit be what is found and felt to hold them, through arms that will accompany and policies that will be transformed toward renewed humanity.

And when souls of the children feel like parched plants from their real desert wanderings—God, come home to their hearts and to 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 wide your love really is! You have brought us here to hear the cries of detained families. Make our hearts open in this place and space, and give us the power to understand and to respond. AMEN.



Interfaith Litany for Family Protection

Leader 1: Because as communities of faith, we are deeply inspired by stories of forced migration—of asylees, displaced persons, and refugees—which are told throughout our sacred texts;

All: *We pray for children seeking protection, in hopes they will find safety among us.*

Leader 2: Because key faith figures from multiple traditions personally endured persecution, and were led to new homes by a God of liberation to escape violence;

All: *We pray for families seeking protection, that they may hold one another in unity.*

Leader 3: Because the stories of Exodus in the Torah shared how the migrant Moses helped his own family become stable and overcome oppression, and led his community to defeat barriers and find a new land;

All: *We pray for generosity to be offered in our land to those who have been haunted by violence, fears, and journeys through pain.*

Leader 4: Because the Prophet Mohammed cared so deeply to protect his communities that he instructed some to migrate to a new country after they suffered injustice and torture, and eventually became a refugee himself as he fled Mecca to find refuge in Medina;

All: *We pray for every single child pushed by violence from their homeland and then pulled from their parents' arms through zero tolerance policies to be reunited immediately, and surrounded by policies that promote freedom not fierceness, accountability not abuse, refuge not prison-like restrictions.*

Leader 5: Because Jesus' family was urged by an angel to escape to Egypt to avoid threats to his young life under Herod's vindictive violence, and remained there in safety until Herod's death;

All: *We pray that you would continue to strengthen us, and all who are making decisions about how to care for vulnerable communities, to be our best selves, to act with confidence in our abundant blessings and not out of fear of scarcity, and to remember the sacred gifts and rights of all human creatures. For all children are God's children. AMEN.*



See Disciples Statement Against Family Separation here:
<https://disciples.org/resources/justice/immigration/family-separations/>

See here to be reminded of the many ways Disciples, with other faith and human rights partners, have spoken out against family detention for over five years: <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/press-releases/family-detention-sign-on-2015-05/>

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See also these interfaith prayers, which Disciples joined in praying outside Dilley family detention center in April of 2015: http://www.mercymidatlantic.org/PDF/Prayer_for_Detained_Immigrant_Families_04302015.pdf

See a compilation of faith statements against family separation here:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1veQc6W4OU0wQcwUIeRYIas8wHYc_3nLp8qI2mrS5AxY/edit