

The Watford Word

www.watfordchurchofchrist.org

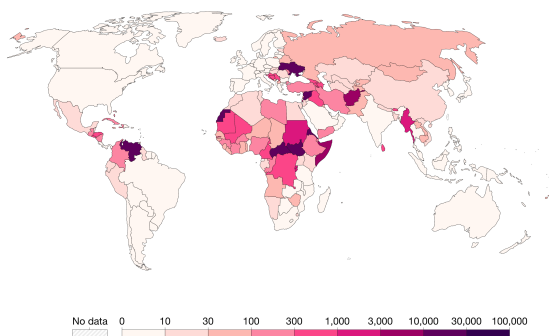
What's on

Saturday 21 Oct - 10AM. Gardening at the church
Sunday 22 Oct - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking
Sunday 29 Oct - 10:30AM. Archie Higgin speaking
Sunday 05 Nov - 10:30AM. Stefan speaking
Sunday 12 Nov - 10:30AM. Remembrance Sunday
Sunday 19 Nov - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking
Sunday 26 Nov - 10:30AM. Advent Sunday
Sunday 03 Dec - 10:30AM. Stefan speaking
Saturday 02 Dec - AIM session: Biblical counselling
Sunday 10 Dec - 10:30AM. Dr Andy Boakye speaking
Sunday 17 December - 10:30AM. Carol service
Sunday 24 December - 10:30AM. Service
Sunday 31 December - 10:30AM. Service
Sunday 07 January - 10:30AM. Stefan speaking

What would Jesus do with refugees?

The plight of refugees in our world is desperate. It always has been, but the numbers are staggering today.

Number of refugees per 100,000 population, by country of origin, 2022
People recognized as refugees¹, as a proportion of the total population of their country of origin.



Source: UN High Commissioner for Refugees

OurWorldInData.org/migration - CC BY

1. Refugee: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) defines refugees in the following way: "Those in need of international protection, being outside their country of origin because of serious threats against which the authorities of their home country cannot or will not protect them. In addition, individuals who are outside their country of origin (typically because they have been forcibly displaced across international borders) but who may not qualify as refugees under international or regional law, may in certain circumstances also require international protection, on a temporary or longer-term basis. This may include, for example, persons who are displaced across an international border in the context of disasters or the adverse effects of climate change but who are not refugees. In such situations, a need for international protection would reflect the inability of the country of origin to protect against serious harm."

Focusing on this matter is not a political issue (although we would hope that the answers to the question might influence our politicians). Rather, we are asking how God feels about the

vulnerable, and what our response could be. For example, consider this passage:

Deuteronomy 10:18-19 (NIV): "He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt."

We ourselves did not belong in God's kingdom. Our present citizenship is only because of his great mercy and compassion:

"...remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world...Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household," (Ephesians 2:12, 19 NIV11)

Other relevant Scriptures could include: Matthew 25:35-36; Leviticus 19:33-34; Hebrews 13:1-2; Isaiah 58:6-7; Luke 10: 25-37.

Talking about a topic like this can be overwhelming. It can be hard to find the personal relevance. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Biblical References: Examine passages in the Bible that relate to refugees, migrants, and foreigners. Read New Testament teachings on love, compassion, and helping others in need.
2. Context and Historical Background: Explore the historical and cultural context of biblical times regarding migration, refugees, and hospitality. This can provide insights into how Jesus and other biblical figures interacted with strangers and foreigners.
3. Jesus' Teachings: Study Jesus' teachings on love, compassion, and caring for the marginalised.

Explore parables and stories that illustrate these principles, such as the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

4. Church History: Research how the early Christian church and subsequent church history have addressed issues related to refugees and migrants. Consider examples of outstanding people who advocated for the rights and well-being of displaced people.

5. Contemporary Relevance: Connect biblical teachings to contemporary issues related to refugees and immigration. Explore the challenges faced by refugees today, the role of hospitality, and how Christians can respond to these challenges in a compassionate and Christ-like manner.

6. Practical Application: Develop practical ways in which you and we as a faith community can follow Jesus' example in welcoming refugees. This may include supporting refugee resettlement programs, volunteering, and advocating for just immigration policies.

7. Personal Reflection: Reflect on your own faith and how it informs your view on this issue. Share personal stories or anecdotes that relate to the theme of the sermon.

Following this [link](https://www.malcolmcox.org/ideas-for-engaging-with-the-refugee-crisis/) will take you to some more suggestions: <https://www.malcolmcox.org/ideas-for-engaging-with-the-refugee-crisis/>

Eco Church Progress

As mentioned by Penny last Sunday, we are beginning the process of becoming an eco-church. One of the first steps is a gardening project. Turn up at the church building prepared to dig and plant on Saturday 21st October 10am. If you have relevant tools please bring them. By the way, you do realise that you'll be becoming like God when you are gardening, right? God is a



gardener — “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.” (John 15:1 NIV11)

Some of the eco-theology materials on my website can be accessed here: <https://www.malcolmcox.org/ecology-and-theology/>

Eco-church is an initiative of the Christian ecology charity, A Rocha. You can find more information here — <https://youtu.be/iF5V2S-kkgs>, and at this link: <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk>

Opportunity to Bless the Watford YMCA

This week I received a message from my good friend Matt Penny, chaplaincy team leader at the YMCA in Watford. The details of how we can bless the YMCA can be found at this [link](https://www.malcolmcox.org/opportunity-to-bless-the-watford-ymca/): <https://www.malcolmcox.org/opportunity-to-bless-the-watford-ymca/>

Watford Media

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