

The Parish Church of St Anne, Kew

SOCIAL JUSTICE FORUM

Year 2: Second meeting.

Saturday 11 February, 2017, 10-12.

FOCUS on ASYLUM SEEKERS

Programme

Welcome, introductions and guide to session

Liturgy

Studying information about asylum seekers

Bible study

Silent prayer and reflection

Action to date

Congregational involvement 2017

Diary dates and closing prayer

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS. Before we begin our liturgy, we will have one minute's silence to remember Helen Kraus who

contributed to the Social Justice Forum.

2. LITURGY (based on Love in Action, from Corrymeela Worship Book, p. 32)

Leader: God, you are love itself

All: You have shown yourself to us in many ways – all of which speak of love

Leader: Out of love for us, Jesus gave himself up to death. He stretched out his arms of love on the cross that all people might come within your saving embrace.

All: God, your love is boundless! We praise you for your love.

Leader: Friends, if this is how God has loved us, then we should love one another in the same way

All: God is love; those who live in love live in God and God lives in them.

Leader: If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates sister or brother, that person is a liar

All: If we do not love our sister and brother whom we see, we cannot love God, whom we do not see

Leader: This then is the commandment Jesus gives us: We who love God must love our sisters and brothers too.

All: We confess that often we have been selfish and unloving. We have not loved God with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. Renew us with your love, Lord. Free our love for one another and for the stranger in our midst.

Leader: Give us God, a vision of our world as your love would make it.

All: A world where the weak are protected rather than exploited, and none go hungry or poor; a world where the benefits and resources of the world are shared, and everyone can enjoy them; a world where different nations, races and cultures live in tolerance and mutual respect; a world where peace is built with justice and justice is guided by love; and give us courage and

inspiration to help build it, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

3. SOME INFORMATION ABOUT ASYLUM SEEKERS IN THE UK (BACKGROUND TO JUDGE JOHN MANUELL'S TALK ON 22 MARCH)

i. What is asylum?

Asylum is protection given by a country to someone fleeing from persecution in their own country. According to Article 1 of the 1951 United Nations Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is a person who:

... owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country;

As a signatory to the Convention, the UK grants asylum to those who meet these criteria. The UK also adheres to the European Convention on Human Rights, which prevents the UK from sending someone to a country where there is a real risk they may be exposed to torture, or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. *Source: House of Commons briefing paper, December 2016, downloaded 12.1.17.*

ii. Who is an asylum seeker?

An asylum seeker is someone who has applied for asylum and is awaiting a decision on whether they will be granted refugee status. An asylum applicant who does not qualify for refugee status may still be granted leave to remain in the UK for humanitarian or other reasons. An asylum seeker whose application is refused at initial decision may appeal the decision through an appeals process. Asylum applicants initially refused refugee status may be granted leave to remain following an appeal. *Source: House of Commons briefing paper, December 2016, downloaded 12.1.17*

iii. What percentage of migrants are asylum seekers?

A long-term international migrant is someone who changes their country of usual residence for a period of at least a year. In 2015,

there were around 631,000 long-term international immigrants into the UK; around 33,600 of these were asylum seekers, which was 5.3%. *Source: House of Commons briefing paper, December 2016, downloaded 12.1.17*

iv. Changes in asylum applications and outcomes

Table 1 shows the changes in asylum applications and outcomes from 2012-2016. June 2016 is the sixth successive year in which asylum applications have risen, although the number of applications is still less than half the level of the peak in 2002 (103,081) and relatively low compared with some other European countries. The table shows that rather over one third of applications on which there are initial decisions are granted asylum, and just under two thirds are refused. The percentage of asylum applicants refused at initial decision reached its highest point at 88% in 2004. In the period from 2004 to 2015, around three-quarters of applicants refused asylum at initial decision lodged an appeal, but only around one quarter of those appeals were allowed.

Table 1. Asylum applications and initial decisions for main applicants

Year ending	Total applications	Total Initial decisions	Granted	% granted	Refused	% Refused
June 2012	19,996	16,644	5,803	35%	10,841	65%
June 2013	23,523	18,712	7,105	38%	11,607	62%
June 2014	23,515	13,795	5,120	37%	8,675	63%
June 2015	25,919	28,345	11,601	41%	16,744	59%
June 2016	36,465	26,350	9,957	38%	16,393	62%

Source: Home Office Asylum Statistics, August 2016. Downloaded 10.1.17.

v. Where do asylum seekers come from?

In 2015, 35% of asylum applicants were nationals of African countries, 29% were nationals of Asian countries, 26% were nationals of countries in the Middle East, and 7% were from Europe. The Home Office comments:

‘World events have an effect on who applies for asylum at any particular time. For example, the number of applicants from Syria increased sharply following the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in early 2011. The 2,563 applications for asylum from Syrian nationals in the year ending June 2016 compares with 125 in the year ending March 2011. In addition, increasing numbers of people have sought asylum from other countries where there have been concerns over human rights. For example, in the year ending June 2016, there were 2,790 asylum applications from nationals of Eritrea compared to 790 in the year ending June 2011.’

Table 2. Countries from which the largest number of asylum applications came in the year ending June 2016, compared with 2015.

Country	Year ending June 2016	Ranking	Year ending June 2015	Ranking
Iran	4,910	1	2,052	4
Iraq	3,199	2	847	10
Pakistan	2,992	3	2,313	2
Eritrea	2,790	4	3,540	1
Afghanistan	2,690	5	1,337	7
Syria	2,563	6	2,157	3

Source: Home Office Asylum Statistics, August 2016. Downloaded 10.1.17.

vi. How does the UK compare to other countries in Europe?

The Home Office statistics compare the number of asylum seekers in the UK compared to elsewhere in Europe. In 2015, there were six asylum applications for every 10,000 people resident in the UK. Across the EU28 there were 26 asylum applications for every 10,000 people. The UK is therefore below the average among EU countries for asylum applications per head of population, ranking 17th among EU28 countries on this measure.

In the year ending June 2016 the total number of asylum applications to the European Union was an estimated 1,493,000, an increase of 86% compared to the year ending June 2015 (801,000).

Table 3 Asylum applications in top eight European countries in the year ending June 2016.

Country	Number of asylum applications	Country	Number of asylum applications
Germany	665,000	France	86,000
Sweden	149,000	Austria	85,000
Hungary	131,000	Netherlands	47,000
Italy	104,000	UK	44,000

Source: Source: Home Office Asylum Statistics, August 2016. Downloaded 10.1.17.

vii. What benefits do asylum seekers receive in the UK?

The Government gives the following advice on the relevant web site”:

“You can ask for somewhere to live, a cash allowance or both as an asylum seeker.

Housing: *You’ll be given somewhere to live if you need it. This could be in a flat, house, hostel or bed and breakfast. You can’t choose where you live. It’s unlikely you’ll get to live in London or south-east England.*

Cash support *You’ll be able to collect money from a local post office each week. This will help you pay for things you need like food, clothing and toiletries. You’ll get £36.95 for each person in your household.*

If you’ve been refused asylum you’ll be given: *somewhere to live; £35.39 per person on a payment card for food, clothing and toiletries. You won’t be given the payment card if you don’t take the offer of somewhere to live; any money.”*

Source: *HYPERLINK* "<https://www.gov.uk/asylum-support/what-youll-get>" <https://www.gov.uk/asylum-support/what-youll-get> Downloaded 12.1.2017

viii. What is detention?

The UK has one of the largest immigration detention facilities in Europe. As of January 2015, there were 11 Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs) (two were closed later in 2015), four Residential Short Term Holding Facilities (RSTHFs), one Non Residential Short Term Holding Facility (NRSTHF), one pre-departure accommodation (for families), 19 Holding rooms at ports and 11 at reporting centres. Except for four IRCs that are managed by the Prison Service, the Home Office has outsourced the management of its detention facilities to private firms – Mitie, GEO, G4S and Serco. The contract for managing the Holding rooms, the NRSTHF and two of the four RSTHFs passed to Reliance (now Tascor) in 2011. Immigration detainees may also be detained in prisons and there is currently capacity for 600 detainees under a service level agreement with the National Offender Management Service. Source: *The Migration Observatory, Immigration Detention in the UK. Downloaded 12.1.17.*

The number of people entering detention in the year ending March 2016 increased by 4% to 32,163.

Over the same period there was an 8% increase in those people leaving detention (from 30,326 to 32,610).

At the end of March 2016, 2,925 people were in detention.

Over a third (36%) of people leaving detention had been detained for seven days or less (11,635). Of these, 49% (5,748) were granted temporary admission or release, 48% (5,593) were removed, and the remaining 3% were bailed or granted leave to enter or remain.

A small minority (7%, but 2,325 individuals) had been in detention for between one and two years and 43 for two years or longer.

There are nearly five times as many men detained as women.

Source: Home Office National Statistics, Detention. 26 May 2016.

Downloaded 12.1.17

ix. How long do asylum applications take?

In June 2010, the Home Office introduced a new time series for measuring the backlog of asylum applications, based on the UK Border Agency (UKBA) administrative database. This new series counts the number of applications for asylum lodged since 1 April 2006 still under consideration at the end of each quarter. According to the new series, the total number of pending cases received for asylum since 2006 was 25,902 at the end of September 2016. This was slightly smaller than in the year ending June 2016, but not much smaller than the number of pending cases in the year ending March 2016 (26,492) which was the highest number of pending cases at the end of any quarter since the new series started in June 2010. *Source: House of Commons briefing, December 2016. Downloaded 12.1.17.*

4. BIBLE STUDY: verses from Psalm 17

Hear a just cause, O Lord; attend to my cry;

Give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit.

From you let my vindication come; let your eyes see the right.

If you try my heart, if you visit me by night, if you test me, you will find no wickedness in me; my mouth does not transgress.

As for what others do, by the word of your lips I have avoided the ways of the violent.

My steps have held fast to your paths, my feet have not slipped.

I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God;

Incline your ear to me, hear my words, wondrously show your steadfast love,

O Saviour of those who seek refuge from their adversaries at your right hand.

5. SILENT PRAYER AND REFLECTION

Prayers

God of love, you are just in all your ways. By your Holy Spirit, inspire us through our membership of St Anne's Kew to learn more of you, and more of ourselves, that we may do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with you our God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Church Urban Fund Lent Resources 2012, adapted.

Loving God, grant us the grace to see your image not just in those we know and like, but in those across the barriers of our making. Forgive the prejudices that divide and exclude, and help us to reflect your outrageous love that reaches out to embrace enemies. So may we truly follow Christ. **Amen.** *Iona Community.*

O Christ my Lord, never let me become self-satisfied, never let me go, never despair of me, never abandon me, but continue your goading, sanctifying, life-giving, love-filling work, until I come closer to your hope and your will for me, O Master and Lord. Amen.

George Appleton

Reflections

In these troubling times a true hope is a pressing necessity. This hope must be more than an illuminated Christmas tree and a brass band in Father Christmas outfits in the ruins of Aleppo, a once great and vibrant city, now a place of slaughter and bloodshed. The hope we hold to is deeper and stronger than this and it is the hope of the

whole world. At the birth of Christ, St Luke tells us that the Angels proclaimed glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace and good will to all people. This is the Christmas hope we are called to proclaim afresh, and to forge, by God's grace, into a lived reality.

When we become instruments of peace and good will, in many small acts of kindness, we are helping to make the world a better place; we are knowing and reflecting God's love. This is the hope that endures when all else changes. *Pope Francis, extract from his message for the 2017 World Day of Migrants and Refugees, January 15, 2017*

Let no smallness retard thee: if thou be not a cedar to help towards a palace; if thou be not amber, bezoar* nor liquid gold, to restore princes; yet thou art a shrub to shelter a lamb, or to feed a bird; or thou art a plantain to ease a child's smart; or a grass to cure a sick dog. *John Donne(1573-1631) Essays in Divinity.* * bezoar, a stone that grows in the stomach of a goat and said to be an antidote to poison.

6. ACTION TO DATE

ACTIONS	IN MEETINGS	CONGREGATIONA L ENGAGEMENT
Awareness raising	Discussion Study of facts and figures; Talk: Dr J Thomas on CARAS (Feb 2015)	Harvest services with Canon N. Sagovsky; Harvest supper; Notice board; Web site.

<p>Giving</p>		<p>CARAS: Harvest service and Advent Fair; Christian Aid: Crib Services (2015 and 2016): for work with Syrian refugees and displaced people; World Vision: collection by youth choir.</p>
<p>Information provision</p>	<p>Handout facts and figures; Handout web site references.</p>	<p>Detailed Signposting (abandoned); Notice board; Six point guidance on notice board and issued at Harvest services; Web site.</p>
<p>Links to organisations</p>	<p>Breaking Barriers; CARAS; Refugee Action Kingston; Refugee Week; Refugees Welcome in Richmond; World Vision.</p>	<p>Breaking Barriers (Sally Cannon and Sue Lloyd) CARAS (Judith Evans and Claudine) Refugee Action Kingston (Marjorie Evans and Daphne Jowitt) Refugees Welcome in Richmond (Claudine via Valerie Booth (chair CTiK); Annabel Clark as CTiK rep) World Vision (Sian Merrilees)</p>

Prayer, worship and bible study	Bible study; Liturgy; Prayer and reflection.	Harvest services; Vigil in Refugee week (CTiK auspices).
Statement of commitment	Discussion of three possible statements	Declaration, for discussion by PCC on 4 March 2017

7. CONGREGATIONAL ENGAGEMENT, 2017.

Already scheduled:

- i. **Awareness raising:** Talk by Judge John Manuell on his work as a Senior Judge in the Immigration and Asylum Chamber. 22nd March 2017, 8pm in the Hall.
- ii. **Links with organisations:** On-going links with Breaking Barriers, CARAS, Refugee Action Kingston, Refugees Welcome in Richmond;
- iii. **Prayer:** next meeting of Social Justice Forum, open to all, will be a two hour session of prayer and reflection on Social Justice and Faith, led by Sister Sue, Community of St Francis, the Anglican Franciscan order; work continuing on a prayer card for the pews and for people to take home.
- iii. **Statement of commitment:** PCC discussion about adopting the Faith and Community declaration on the Southwark Diocesan web site, 4th March 2017. (see last item for proposed St Anne's Declaration)

Suggestions for discussion (in alphabetical order):

- i. **Event with the Chickpea Sisters.**
- ii. **Finding out more about LEAH (Learning English At Home),** local charity;

- iii. Having a specific drive to publicise the Chickpea Sisters.**
- iv. Letter-writing group;**
- v. Making a banner to share in Kew which reflects our loving approach to ‘the stranger in our midst’**
- vi. Participation in Christian Aid Week.** Refugees are the theme of this year’s Christian Aid week 2017 (14 – 20 May)
‘This year, Christian Aid Week marks 60 years of fundraising to bring an end to global poverty. British churches founded Christian Aid in 1945 to support hundreds of thousands of refugees who lost their homes and possessions in the Second World War. This vital work was needed long after the war was over, so in 1957 we launched Christian Aid Week, appealing to the public to help fund the churches’ relief efforts. Sixty years ago, Christians refused to stand by while people suffered in refugee camps. Our generation is rising to that challenge again. We won’t turn our backs on the plight of today’s refugees. /www.christianaid.org.uk/christian-aid-week/christian-aid-week-60th-anniversary
- vii. Participation in Refugee Week (19-25 June). E.g. café evening; celebration of some kind; vigil**
- viii. Publicity drive on behalf of the Chickpea Sisters;**
- ix. Special collection of ‘things’. E.g. books, clothes, fabrics, garden tools, toiletries.**
- x. Special service with guest speaker and special collection rather like Harvest Service in 2016 but on a different occasion;**
- xi. Talk by Matt Powell, Chief Executive of Breaking Barriers**
- xii. Talk by Eleanor Brown, Chief Executive of CARAS;**
- xiii. YOUR idea!**

8. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2017

22 March, 8pm in the Hall	Talk by Judge John Manuell about his work as a senior judge in the Immigration and Asylum Chamber, dealing with appeals by asylum seekers.
14-20 May	Christian Aid week. Focus on Refugees.
20 May, 10-12 in the Church	Social Justice Forum meeting – led prayer in the Church, by Sister Sue, Community of St Francis..
24-26 May	Understanding Islam, three day course by Chris Hewer, in Kew (eight places available)
19-25 June	Refugee Week 2017
End Sept	Christian Aid sponsored walk, Richmond Park
14 October	Social Justice Forum meeting, 10 -12.
2 December	Social Justice Forum meeting, 10-12

9. CLOSING PRAYER: the Lord's Prayer together (slowly!).

10. Web Sites

Asylum: House of Commons briefing paper from House of Commons library:

HYPERLINK "http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN01403" <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN01403>

Home Office: Asylum. National Statistics. 25 August 2016.

HYPERLINK "https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/"

immigration-statistics-january-to-march-2016/detention" <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-january-to-march-2016/detention>

Migration Observatory, University of Oxford. September 2016.
Immigration Detention in the UK.

HYPERLINK "http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/immigration-detention-in-the-uk/" <http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/immigration-detention-in-the-uk/>

11. Update on Refugees Welcome in Richmond (RWinR)

This is the initiative in which Churches Together in Kew (CTinK) are involved, to try, with the support of Richmond Council, to find private rented housing in our borough for 50 Syrian refugee households, currently living in refugee camps as there is nowhere for them to go. The most recent meetings were held on 11 January and 8 February. The lesson of the past year is that it is **extremely** difficult to find suitable properties. So far, only two Syrian households have been housed. [HYPERLINK "http://www.refugeeswelcomeinrichmond.org"](http://www.refugeeswelcomeinrichmond.org)
www.refugeeswelcomeinrichmond.org

LAST CHANCE TO SEE A Bitter Road: Britain and the Refugee Crisis of the 1930s and 1940s. Open to the public between 10am and 5pm, Monday to Friday (10am–7.30pm on Tuesday), at the Wiener Library for the Study of the Holocaust & Genocide, 29 Russell Square, London, WC1B 5DP. **Until 17 February 2017.**

12. DECLARATION for discussion by PCC on 4th March

Since our December meeting, Marian Mollett and Claudine have drawn up the following draft for the PCC meeting:

DECLARATION BY THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST ANNE KEW

Our congregation is: **Christ Centred + Faithful + Inclusive + Outward Looking.** As a witness to these guiding principles, we are glad to adopt the Declaration by the Bishop of Southwark, the Mayor

of London and many faith leaders, that:

We pledge our determination as Londoners to ensure that this great city shall continue to be a place of welcome, generosity and equality, with respect for all.

We condemn and oppose prejudice and distrust and will work unceasingly for tolerance and the common good.

We abhor all examples of exclusion based on ethnic identity that mar relationships between neighbours of all ages, faiths and backgrounds.

We stand in solidarity with those in London who are mistreated or held in contempt because of who they are or where they have come from.

We affirm that our diversity is a source of strength and that we are committed to learning from one another.

We commit to living out this Declaration in our own life, in our teaching and preaching and in our community engagement.

We are trying to fulfil this commitment by:

learning more, with open minds, about refugees, asylum seekers and migration generally;

praying and reflecting on how God is calling us at this time to respond to these issues;

joining with organisations that are working to help the people who are suffering through being refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, notably Breaking Barriers, CARAS (Community Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers), Refugee Action Kingston and Refugees Welcome in Richmond;

sharing what we are trying to do and why, with our family, friends and those whom we meet.

Please click [HERE](#) to join this Declaration [leading to declaration counter and invitation to leave a suggestion on how to deliver the commitment] and [HERE](#) **HYPERLINK "http://tumblr.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=93d78026f4ce1cbc8277537f4&id=22b3bb0b5d&e=3ddee7fa68"**

www.southwark.anglican.org/faithandcommunity to sign the

Declaration on the Diocesan web site.

Meanwhile, the Bishop of Southwark has “*strongly encouraged*” us all to sign “*individually and corporately*” the Declaration on which ours is based. He says: *The more who sign it, the louder will be the voice of tolerance and welcome which we pray will scatter the lingering voices of hatred and division. I offer this Declaration to all Londoners as a way for us to express together strong common purpose and determination to stand in solidarity with each other, no matter from where we may have journeyed to this great Metropolis*”.

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