

Scriptures for
Protecting Welcome, Restoring Hope
Our Christian Witness to Refugees and Immigrants

All Scriptures are from the Contemporary English Version unless otherwise indicated.

Some texts also appear in the Revised Common Lectionary cycle of readings. For congregations desiring to use the full complement of lections for worship (Old Testament, Psalter, Epistle, and Gospel), the cycle year (A, B, or C) and the Sunday on which that text is assigned is also provided.

Exodus 23:21

“Do not mistreat or abuse foreigners who live among you. Remember, you were foreigners in Egypt.”

Exodus 23:22-23

“Do not mistreat widows or orphans. (23) If you do, they will beg for my help, and I will come to their rescue.

Exodus 22:25

“Don't charge interest when you lend money to any of my people who are in need.”

Exodus 23:6

“Make sure that the poor are given equal justice in court.”

Exodus 23:9

“Don't mistreat foreigners. You were foreigners in Egypt, and you know what it is like.”

Leviticus 19:9 (lectionary: Year A, Epiphany 7)

“When you harvest your grain, always leave some of it standing along the edges of your fields and don't pick up what falls on the ground. (10) Don't strip your grapevines clean or father the grapes that fall off the vines. Leave them for the poor and for those foreigners who live among you. I am the Lord your God.”

Leviticus 19:18b

“I am the Lord, and I command you to love others as much as you love yourself.”

Leviticus 19:33-34

“Don't mistreat any foreigners who live in your land. (34) Instead, treat them as well as you treat citizens and love them as much as you love yourself. Remember, you were once foreigners in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.”

Leviticus 23:22

“When you harvest your grain, always leave some of it standing around the edges of your fields and don't pick up what falls on the ground. Leave it for the poor and for those foreigners who live among you. I am the Lord your God!”

Leviticus 24:22

“I am the Lord your God, and I demand equal justice both for you Israelites and for those foreigners who live among you.”

Leviticus 25:35

“If any of your poor people become poor and unable to support themselves, you must help them, just as you are supposed to help foreigners who live among you.”

Leviticus 23:43

“So obey me, and don't be cruel to the poor.”

Deuteronomy 10:18-19

“The Lord defends the rights of orphans and widows. He cares for foreigners and gives them food and clothing. (19) And you should also care for them, because you were foreigners in Egypt.”

Deuteronomy 14:22, 28, 29b

(22) “People of Israel, every year you must set aside ten percent of your grain harvest. (28) Every third year, instead of using the ten percent of your harvest for a big celebration, bring it into town and put it in a community storehouse. (29b) You must also give food to the poor who live in your town, including orphans, widows, and foreigners. IF they have enough to eat, then the Lord your God will be pleased and make you successful in everything you do.”

Deuteronomy 24:17a

“Make sure that orphans and foreigners are treated fairly.”

(nrsv = “You shall not deprive a resident alien or an orphan of justice....”)

Deuteronomy 24:19-21

“If you forget to bring in a stack of harvested grain, don’t go back in the field to get it. Leave it for the poor, including foreigners, orphans, and widows, and the Lord will make you successful in everything you do. (20) When you harvest your olives, don’t try to get them all for yourself, but leave some for the poor. (21) And when you pick your grapes, go over the vines only once, then let the poor have what is left.

Deuteronomy 26:12f

“Every year you are to give ten percent of your harvest to the Lord. But every third year, this ten percent must be given to the poor who live in your town, including Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows. That way, they will have enough to eat. (13) Then you must pray: Our Lord and our God, you have said that ten percent of my harvest is sacred. I have obeyed your command and given this to the poor, including the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows.”

Deuteronomy 27:14, 19

“The people of the Levi tribe will speak and curse in a loud voice, and then the rest of the people will agree to that curse by saying, ‘Amen!’ Here are the curses: ...We ask the Lord to put a curse on anyone who keeps the poor from getting justice, whether these poor are foreigners, widows, or orphans.....”

Deuteronomy 32:4

“The Lord is a mighty rock, and he never does wrong. God can always be trusted to bring justice.”

Psalm 9:7f-9 (lectionary: Year B, Proper 7)

“You rule forever, Lord, and you are on your throne, ready for judgment. (8) You judge the world fairly and treat all nations with justice. (9) The poor can run to you because you are a fortress in times of trouble.”

Psalm 9:16, 18

(16) “You showed what you are like, and you made certain that justice is done, but evil people are trapped by their own evil deeds. (18) The poor and the homeless won’t always be forgotten and without hope.”

Psalm 10:12-14, 17-18

“Do something, Lord God, and use your powerful arm to help those in need. (13) The wicked don’t respect you. In their hearts, they say, ‘God won’t punish us!’ (14) But you see the trouble and the distress, and you will do something. The poor can count on you, and so can orphans. You listen to the longings of those who suffer. You offer them hope, and you pay attention to their cries for help. (18) You defend orphans and everyone else in need, so that no one on earth can terrify others again.”

Psalm 33:4-5

“The Lord is truthful; he can be trusted. (5) He loves justice and fairness and he is kind to everyone everywhere on earth.”

(nrsv = “For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord.”)

Psalm 34:18-19 (lectionary: Year B, Proper 16)

“The Lord is there to rescue all who are discouraged and have given up hope. (19) The Lord’s people may suffer a lot, but he will always bring them safely through.”

Psalm 35:10

“Every bone in my body will shout: ‘No one is like the Lord!’ You protect the helpless from those in power; you save the poor and needy from those who hurt them.”

Psalm 37:30 (lectionary: Year C, Epiphany 7)

“Words of wisdom come when good people speak for justice.”

Psalm 41:1-2 (lectionary: Year B, Epiphany 7)

“Happy are those who consider the poor; the Lord delivers them in the day of trouble. The Lord protects them and keeps them alive; they are called happy in the land. You do not give them up to the will of their enemies.”

Psalm 69:33

“The Lord will listen when the homeless cry out, and he will never forget his people in prison.”

Psalm 82:3-4 (nrsv) (lectionary: Year C, Proper 10 and Proper 15)

“Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”

Psalm 94:15

“Justice and fairness will go hand in hand, and all who do right will follow along.”

Psalm 102:17 (nrsv)

“He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and will not despise their prayer.”

Psalm 103:6 (nrsv) (lectionary: Year B, Epiphany 8)

“The Lord works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed.”

Psalm 106:3 (nrsv) (lectionary: Year A, Proper 23)

“Happy [blessed] are those who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times.”

Psalm 140:12

“Our Lord, I know that you defend the homeless and see that the poor are given justice.”

Proverbs 22:22 (lectionary: Year B, Proper 18)

“Don’t take advantage of the poor or cheat them in court. The Lord is their defender, and what you do to them, he will do to you.”

Proverbs 28:5 (nrsv)

“The evil do not understand justice, but those who seek the Lord understand it completely.”

Proverbs 31:8-9 (nrsv)

“Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

Ecclesiastes 8:11-14 (nrsv)

(11) “Because sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the human heart is fully set to do evil. (12) Though sinners do evil a hundred times and prolong their lives, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they stand in fear before him, (13) but it will not be well with the wicked, neither will they prolong their days like a shadow, because they do not stand in fear before God. (14) There is a vanity that takes place on earth, that there are righteous people who are treated according to the conduct of the wicked, and there are wicked people who are treated according to the conduct of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity.”

Isaiah 1:17 (nrsv) (lectionary: Year C, Proper 14)

“learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.”

Isaiah 26:7-8

“Our Lord, you always do right, and you make the path smooth for those who obey you. (8) You are the one we trust to bring about justice; above all else we want our name to be honored.”

Isaiah 58:6-12 (nrsv) (lectionary: Years A, B, C, Ash Wednesday)

- (6) “Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?
(7) Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?
(8) Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.
(9) Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
(10) if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.
(11) The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.
(12) Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.”

Jeremiah 9:23-24 (nrsv)

“Thus says the Lord: Do not let the wise boast in their wisdom, do not let the mighty boast in their might, do not let the wealthy boast in their wealth; but let those who boast boast in this, that they understand and know me, that I am the Lord; I act with steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, says the Lord.”

Jeremiah 22:3 (nrsv)

“Thus says the Lord: Act with justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor anyone who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place.”

Amos 5:24 (nrsv) (lectionary: Year A, Proper 27)

“But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

Micah 6:8 (nrsv) (lectionary: Year A, Epiphany 4)

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Zechariah 7:8-10 (nrsv)

(8) “The word of the Lord came to Zechariah, saying: (9) Thus says the Lord of hosts: Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another; (10) do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the alien, or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.”

Matthew 22:37-40 (nrsv) (lectionary: Year A, Proper 25)

“He [Jesus] said to him [one of the Pharisees who was a lawyer], ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ (38) This is the greatest and first commandment. (39) And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ (40) On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Mark 12:29-31 (nrsv) (lectionary: Year B, Proper 26)

“Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; (30) you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ (31) The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Luke 4:18-19 (nrsv) (lectionary: Year C, Epiphany 3)

“When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, (17) and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: (18) “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, (19) to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Luke 10:25-37 (nrsv) (lectionary: Year C, Proper 10)

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (26) He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” (27) He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” (28) And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.”

(29) But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” (30) Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. (31) Now by chance a priest was going down that

road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. (32) So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. (33) But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. (34) He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. (35) The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' (36) Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" (37) He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

2 Corin 8:9-15 (lectionary: Year B, Proper 8)

(9) "You know that our Lord Jesus Christ was kind enough to give up all his riches and become poor, so that you could become rich. (10) A year ago you were the first ones to give, and you gave because you wanted to. So listen to my advice. (11) I think you should finish what you started. If you give according to what you have, you will prove that you are eager to give as you were to think about giving. (12) It doesn't matter how much you have. What matters is how much you are willing to give from what you have. (13) I am not trying to make life easier for others by making life harder for you. But it is only fair (14) for you to share with them when you have so much, and they have so little. Later, when they have more than enough and you are in need, they can share with you. Then everyone will have a fair share, (15) just as the Scriptures say, "Those who gathered too much had nothing left. Those who gathered only a little had all they needed."

2 Corin 9:10-15 (lectionary: Year A, Thanksgiving Day)

(10) "God gives seed to farmers and provides everyone with food. He will increase what you have, so that you can give even more to those in need. (11) You will be blessed in every way, and you will be able to keep on being generous. Then many people will thank God when we deliver your gift. (12)

What you are doing is much more than a service that supplies God's people with what they need. It is something that will make many others thank God. (13) The way in which you have proved yourselves by this service will bring honor and praise to God. You believed the message about Christ and you obeyed it by sharing generously with God's people and with everyone else. (14) Now they are praying for you and want to see you, because God used you to bless them so very much. (15) Thank God for his gift that is too wonderful for words!"

Hebrews 13:3 (lectionary: Year C, Proper 17)

"Remember the Lord's people who are in jail and be concerned for them. Don't forget those who are suffering, but imagine that you are there with them."

James 1:27-2:1, 8 (lectionary: Year B, Proper 17 and Proper 18)

(1:27) Religion that pleases God the Father must be pure and spotless. You must help the needy orphans and widows and not let this world make you evil. (2:1) My friends if you have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, you won't treat some people better than others. (8) You will do all right, if you obey the most important law in the Scriptures. It is the law that commands us to love others as much as we love ourselves. (9) But if you treat some people better than others, you have done wrong, and the Scriptures teach that you have sinned.

James 3:16-18 (lectionary: Year B, Proper 20)

(16) Whenever people are jealous or selfish, they cause trouble and do all sorts of cruel things. (17) But the wisdom that comes from above leads us to be pure, friendly, gentle, and sincere. (18) When peacemakers plant seeds of peace, they will harvest justice.

1 John 3:11, 17-18 (lectionary: Year B, Easter 4)

(11) For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. (17) How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? (18) Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.