

**There are many Biblical stories of people forced from their homes to seek safety.**

- *Adam and Eve exiled from the Garden.*
- *Abram leaves Ur to follow God into the Promised Land.*
- *Joseph brings his family to Egypt to escape famine.*
- *Moses leads the former slaves from Egypt back to the Promised Land.*
- *The Israelites return to the Promised Land after being held captive by the Babylonians.*
- *The Holy Family escapes Israel to Egypt to avoid Jesus being murdered by Herod.*

**War and famine have been driving human migration for thousands of years. Today is no different.**

**The constant migration of humanity helps to universalize a Mosaic commandment found in the book of Leviticus:**

*The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born.  
Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord, your God.*

- Leviticus 19:34

**This command is so profound within the Torah, that it is repeated in Exodus:**

*Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner,  
for you were foreigners in Egypt.*

- Exodus 22:21

**And a third time in the Deuteronomy,**

*And you are to love those who are foreigners,  
for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.*

- Deuteronomy 10:19

**God is telling us in no uncertain terms to work from a place of compassion. We have all been strangers, but because of that, we are also well-suited to care for those who are now strangers to this land.**

*In a time when violence displaces people, how can we offer a home of peace for weary travelers?*

*In a time when climate change forces people to look for sustenance, how can we alleviate hunger and thirst?*



# World Refugee Day

*When people leave their homes to escape oppression, how can our home be a refuge of freedom and safety?*

*When families leave their home to seek a better life, how can we offer opportunities to grow and prosper?*

**To seek a better life may be the most human of all desires. It is one that we are all familiar with in one way or another. Let us be mindful of that desire in ourselves and in our own history and ask ourselves how we have become who we are as a result of that desire. Let us sit with God's call to be compassionate toward those who seek to fulfill that desire now, for we were once strangers in a foreign land.**