

Get Involved: Pray



EMBRACE Prayer Group May 2013

At our AGM and Spring Meeting on the 16th May we celebrate 10 years of EMBRACE by looking back over the past decade as well as looking ahead to possible future developments. In this month's prayer letter, Chairperson Denise Wright shares her reflections on migration, welcome and hospitality.

During the thirty years of the Troubles, Northern Ireland was not an attractive place to visit or especially to migrate to live. These thirty years, however, should not lead us to forget that the story of this island is largely one of migration, outward but also inward. From the ancient Celts to the French Huguenots of the 18th century, to today's immigrants from across Europe and the world, like many places in the world, our culture and society have largely been shaped by immigrants.

How then shall we welcome these immigrants who we encounter as strangers? We can see one model of welcome in the life of Jesus. Time and again we see Jesus on the margins with those who are strangers, offering them connection and welcome.

Throughout the New Testament, we find an emphasis on welcome and hospitality, especially for the stranger. The writer of Hebrews even compares strangers with angels, saying "Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it." We do well to remember that the angels encountered in the biblical story were often greeted with fear and even hostility. Encounters with strangers are not always easy; they can even be risky, but as God first welcomed us, so Jesus promises to be "with you always, even unto the end of the world".

This month we pray for...

- People who currently find they are living on the margins of society and for those who seek to welcome and befriend them
- Encounters with those who are different from ourselves and that we too might be transformed by them
- EMBRACE, as together we look back over the past ten years and also look ahead to see where we might be called to serve

We give thanks for...

- The movement of people throughout the centuries and the rich traditions and cultures that have been passed along
- This island and the people who have more recently come to call it 'home'
- The opportunities each of us have to offer welcome and hospitality, especially to the stranger
- Jesus' promise to be 'with [us] always, even unto the end of the world'

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and to pray with us throughout the month. Do you have a topic and/or an item of concern or joy that you would like to share with the EMBRACE Prayer Group? If so, please contact aneta@embraceni.org.