



The **EPISCOPAL CHURCH** *in* **CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA**

Refugee Ministry in the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania

The call for us to be responsive to the global refugee crisis is rooted in Scripture. The power that we have, as privileged people of a First World country is best used for the welfare of others and for building the Common Good of our global community.

The actions that we take, as small as they may be, are vitally important in the healing of our world from poverty, strife, degradation and violence.

We love, because God loved us first.

Hospitality

Hospitality is a Judeo-Christian virtue that is exercised in welcoming and caring for refugees. Our hospitality is offered with the ancestral experiences of our own displacement- for we, too, were once without a home.

When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. (Leviticus 19:33-34)

No stranger had to spend the night in the street, for my door was always open to the traveler (Job, discussing his devotion to God) (Job 31:32)

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' (Matthew 25:25-36)

We are One

God's mission is a mission of restoration and reconciliation, a return to the wholeness in which the world was created. This wholeness does not call for assimilation, but for a celebration of our wonderful diversity, united in Christ. Christians, united with each other, are also to recognize and celebrate the diversity of other religious traditions and to reach out to our interfaith brothers and sisters, showing compassion and care for all of humankind. Our Baptismal Covenant calls for us to "respect the dignity of every human being." (BCP 294) In this, God's mission becomes clear: Opening our hearts and homes to refugees is a Kingdom-building project.

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. (1 Corinthians 12:12-14)

For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Galatians 5:14)

The Refugee Resource Team's focus on education allows us to enter into the plight of the refugee with knowledge, understanding and greater awareness. May our enlightenment lead us to paths of compassion, action and love.

The Rt. Rev. Audrey C. Scanlan, XI Bishop

May 2018