

December 2015

Dear Rectors, Deacons, Priests in Charge and Lay Leaders of the parishes in the Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania,

Since this fall, our eyes have been on the unending stream of refugees taking flight from their war-torn homeland of Syria and seeking safety in countries across our globe. These refugees join hundreds of thousands of others from Nepal, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, the Congo and Myanmar, to name some of the other places where “home” is no longer a safe place to be.

The recent terrorist attacks in Paris have sharpened our focus on the desire of refugees to come to our country and our political theatre has added a layer of conversation to the discussion that has resulted in increased fear, mistrust and anxiety about whom should be invited to the United States for resettlement.

In a pastoral letter on November 14th, I asked for us to pray. In my blog entry (www.compasspointsmappingtheway.blogspot.com) on Nov. 20th, I wrote that prayer leads to action... and now, I would like to invite us to act.

In a meeting just before Thanksgiving with Charlotte Fry, the PA Coordinator for Refugee Resettlement, a small group of interested Episcopalians from around our diocese learned more about the refugee plight. We learned about the needs in our diocesan area for food, clothing, companionship and mentoring of refugees. We learned that there is a need for space to hold ESL classes. We heard about the good work that is already underway with our Lutheran, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic colleagues.

In response to that meeting and as an early effort, we would like to invite your participation this Advent through Epiphany in taking a collection of goods from your parish. Specifically, we are calling for new or gently used pots & pans, new pillows and small toys for children.

This is not to circumvent projects taking place in your own congregations in this season, but to invite an additional effort... for those who are sorely in need.

Please consider this request, review the attached materials and contact Deacon Loretta Collins for more information at lcollins@diocesecpa.org.

With gratitude for all that we have, and all that we can give to improve the lives of others,

Audrey

The Rt. Rev. Audrey Scanlan
Bishop

