

RESOLUTION #2: **Welcoming Immigrant Families**

RESOLVED, that this Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania recognize our responsibility to welcome resettled immigrant families as new neighbors into our communities.

RESOLVED, that this Convention acknowledge that Episcopalians, the larger body of Christ, and our communities are enhanced by learning about issues facing immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers.

RESOLVED, that Diocesan Migration Ministry Resources (local), in cooperation with Episcopal Migration Ministries (national), make available training modules and educational programs about migration and related issues for parishes to utilize at their discretion.

EXPLANATION

The United States remains a beacon of hope to thousands of refugees fleeing oppression around the world. They live in crowded, unsanitary refugee camps for years as they wait for permission to come to America. Immigrant advocate agencies work with state and federal governments to resettle families of immigrants and refugees by helping them adjust to new lives and newfound freedom. Involvement to assist in resettling immigrant families will enrich the lives of givers and recipients.

The Biden administration initially announced it would raise the refugee cap from 15,000 to 62,500 for 2021. President Biden reinforced his goal of 125,000 for the fiscal year that starts in October, but cautioned that number “will still be hard to hit.” What is certain is that more immigrant families will become our new neighbors in Central Pennsylvania.

God has blessed the Episcopal Church with varied gifts, such as hospitality, prophetic action, compassion, teaching, exhortation, and generosity. Connected and woven together, with support from Episcopal Migration Ministries, these gifts can strengthen and expand a web of support for welcoming immigrant families into our communities.

In order to support immigrant advocate agencies in their effort to resettle immigrant families into our communities, a parish may do any of the following:

- Recognize Monday, June 22, 2022 as 'World Refugee Day' and celebrate it during a sermon or worship by using Matthew 25: 31-40 "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me."
- Invite staff of immigrant advocate agencies to come speak in person or virtually for an Adult Forum presentation, Sunday school lesson, sermon, or an educational assembly.
- Assemble caring circles of parishioners to build relationships with immigrant families and to provide them with tangible, necessities of life items as needed. By creating a 'Welcome Team' of interested and dedicated parishioners, it will nurture a supportive relationship with a resettled refugee family and break through the cycle of isolation that oftentimes comes with being new to a community. An alternate activity may be to undertake a donation appeal to fill 'Welcome Kits' to give to immigrant advocate agencies for resettled families.

Sponsor: The Rev. Rebecca Myers, Church of the Nativity and St. Stephen Episcopal Church (Newport)

Co-sponsors:

Gerry Garber, St. Stephen's Cathedral (Chairperson of Diocesan Migration Ministry Resources Sandra Elion, St. Andrews Episcopal Church (Lewisburg)

Fred and Rosemary Hartman, All Saints Episcopal Church (Hershey)

Joan Horn, All Saints Episcopal Church (Hershey) David W. Martin, St. John's Episcopal Church (Lancaster)

The Rev. Daphne Messersmith

The Rev. Beth Mollard

Carolyn Patterson, St. Paul's Episcopal Church (Harrisburg)

Sam and Margie Ward, All Saints Episcopal Church (Hershey)

The Rev. Dr. Gregory Welin, Mount Calvary Episcopal Church (Camp Hill)