

Refugee Ministry Forming at St. John's, Lancaster

Over the last forty years, St. John's, Lancaster has sponsored refugees from such diverse locations as Cambodia, Viet Nam, Uganda, Bhutan, and former Yugoslavia, among others. This year, we are embarking on a new adventure in Refugee Resettlement Ministries in collaboration with Church World Service. At an introductory session held on March 6th, 22 parishioners joined Amanda Knouse+ and Matt Johnson, a CWS representative, in discussing ways we can work together to support a refugee family in Lancaster City. St. John's will be partnering with the neighborhood to resettle a family in what's being referred to as a new hybrid ministry initiative: Church members and neighbors working together to make a difference. As housing continues to be an obstacle in refugee resettlement opportunities, the vestry of St. John's recently voted to use the townhome situated directly behind the parish offices as new transitional housing for this initiative.

The Welcome/Resettlement Team, comprised of parishioners and neighbors, recently completed a training session conducted by CWS and has held several organizational meetings focusing on how we can help a refugee family in the areas of housing, transportation, school, cultural adjustment, medical needs, and jobs and finance. (contact: Rich Garon rich@richgaron.com)