

# Creating welcome and support for Afghan refugees and our allies..

As our hearts are broken over the loss of American servicemen and women who gave their lives for the safety of Americans and Afghans yesterday, and the Afghani people who lost their lives. And as we witness another painful war-ending evacuation of a long occupation where we question the outcomes, we can do our best to welcome the stranger into our midst as Jesus describes in Matthew 25.

Last night several of our parishioners attended the Town Hall for Lutheran Social Services of the National Capitol Area, which is working in a public/private shared effort to bring refugees from around the world into the United States. The funds from Congress are never enough and these shared efforts are our current best solution. This program only succeeds when it relies upon our contributions and volunteering assistance.

These public/private ventures are common with many other organizations as well. Lutheran Social Services, like our own Episcopal Relief and Development has been able to maintain high standards of sustainability and accountability throughout such efforts.

What I heard clearly last night was that there is an overwhelming desire to support refugee families and allies coming into this area, such that LSS and LRS (Lutheran Refugee Services) are a bit overwhelmed by the requests for support, thankfully. That the needs of this situation were different because of the immigrant status that isn't able to be verified as the rapid evacuation took place. As a result, many of the immigrants currently don't qualify for SIV (Special Immigrant Visa) that the release of federal funds require. Thus, for now, until Congress can make an exception, such public/private ventures are largely dependent upon private funding from individuals and corporations.

How can we best help right now?

- Gift cards help families to purchase goods they need to establish a sense of home. Major chain grocery stores and department stores are a huge help: (Giant gift cards, Target, Bed Bath and Beyond)—we will accept these in the Church Office, in offering baskets at services.
- Donate a gift of any size for refugees ([https://lssnca.org/take\\_action/donate-afghan-allies.html](https://lssnca.org/take_action/donate-afghan-allies.html))
- Act. Offer transportation or assemble welcome home gift boxes
- Lutheran Social Services office closest to us is: 8922 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax, VA 22031 (phone: (703)698-5026)

- Start a fundraiser, donate funds through the website: [lssnca.org](https://lssnca.org)
- Sponsor families as a congregation—I would like us to set a goal of sponsoring 2 families for five years to begin our support journey.
- Go through the process of becoming a foster home—(can take up to 3 months for approval process, background checks and training)
- Help set up homes for families
- Purchase student supplies
- Housing of families in homes works best if the refugee family can have private spaces and entrances, a shared kitchen is okay.
- Help find jobs for refugees.
- Become a virtual mentor.
- Volunteer to help administer volunteers.
- Pray and be supportive for the long haul.

Joni Langevoort, our Outreach co-chair, has also compiled a list of ways to support through our Tyson's Interfaith partners as well:

## **AFGHANISTAN**

### **HOW YOU CAN HELP**

The desperate situation in Afghanistan has invited each of us to consider what we are personally able to do in the effort to help save and resettle the maximum number of Afghans. These are a few resources for your consideration:

**LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES:** The leading resettlement agency resettling refugees in the DMV area that is already in the process of resettling hundreds of recently arrived Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders, working with local nonprofit groups -- they need financial donations, volunteers for apartment setup, transportation, tutoring, advocacy, and more.

[https://lssnca.org/take\\_action/afghan-allies.html](https://lssnca.org/take_action/afghan-allies.html).

**HIAS:** formerly known as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, HIAS has been working in the U.S. and around the world for 130 years on refugee resettlement and advocacy -- now seeking financial assistance, advocates, and volunteers to provide housing for newly arrived Afghan families.

<https://www.hias.org/crisis-afghanistan-how-you-can-help>

**INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE:** another leading refugee resettlement agency, resettling refugees in the Baltimore area and elsewhere in the U.S. and around the world.

[https://help.rescue.org/donate/afghanistan?ms=gs\\_ppc\\_fy21\\_afghanistan\\_dmusa\\_aug&initialms=gs\\_ppc\\_fy21\\_afghanistan\\_dmusa\\_aug&gclid=Cj0KCCQjwpcf2IBhDkARIsAGVo0D3jll2obc5pXu9AK2xHInYXor5ZwNLIJJ7vgXzI3SD9svQjG6GddU4aAiusEALw\\_wcB](https://help.rescue.org/donate/afghanistan?ms=gs_ppc_fy21_afghanistan_dmusa_aug&initialms=gs_ppc_fy21_afghanistan_dmusa_aug&gclid=Cj0KCCQjwpcf2IBhDkARIsAGVo0D3jll2obc5pXu9AK2xHInYXor5ZwNLIJJ7vgXzI3SD9svQjG6GddU4aAiusEALw_wcB)

**DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS:** providing medical care for the neediest people in the toughest places around the world, including 5 still-operating projects in Afghanistan.

<https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/what-we-do/countries/afghanistan>

**NO ONE LEFT BEHIND:** the only nation-wide association of wartime allies in the US dedicated to ensuring that America keeps its promise to our interpreters from Iraq and Afghanistan, now trying, among other things, to charter planes to rescue Afghan refugees.

<https://nooneleft.org/default.aspx?>

Follow them on Instagram at: [@NoOneLeftBehindUS](#)

**INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (IRAP):** a leading organization, headquartered in New York, involved in litigation and advocacy on behalf of refugees across the United States.

<https://refugeerights.org/>

Follow them on Instagram at: [@RefugeeAssistance](#)

**CHURCH WORLD SERVICE:** another leading refugee resettlement agency, run by U.S. churches for over 70 years, involved in advocacy as well as refugee resettlement around the world.

<https://cwsglobal.org/learn/refugees-and-immigrants/>

Follow them on Instagram at: [@CWS\\_Global](#)

**KABULTEC** is collecting items for newly arrived refugees from Afghanistan in the DC area August 14–28. They are collecting furniture and other items. Furniture will be carried to the warehouses of the distributing organizations or to the refugee's home directly from a donor's residence. Other items can be dropped at the Goodwin House in Bailey's Crossroads in Arlington/Falls Church. NOTE: Arrangements must be made **before** arriving at Goodwin House. Needed items and how to donate:

- **Furniture** for a totally empty house (i.e., bedrooms, dining room, living room, study, outdoor). **Please call Nasrine to set up a time** to pick up items from your home.

- **Household items** for an empty house: **Bedding** (sheets, pillowcases, and blankets **Dining** (tablecloths, napkins, cutlery, silverware, serving utensils, bowls/platters, dishes, cups), **Kitchen** (pots, pans, utensils, small appliances, dishtowels)
- **Other household items** (clocks, ashtrays, vases, knick-knacks, curtains, small rugs, lamps)
- **School supplies** (notebooks, dictionaries, pens, pencils, rulers, sharpeners, magnifying glasses, crayons, graph paper, maps, etc.)
- Toys, games

**ALL DONORS please:**

**Staple or tape one list with your name, address, telephone number, and email to the *inside* of the bag or box being donated and include an ITEMIZED list of the items with ESTIMATED VALUE.** Nasrine needs this list as she must prepare the official inventory and estimate—charities must report their collection efforts to the IRS. For additional info or to make arrangements for donations, contact Nasrine at [kabultec@gmail.com](mailto:kabultec@gmail.com), or at **703-887-4295**.

**Help for our sisters and brothers in Haiti:**

Please also consider giving a contribution in this time to Episcopal Relief and Development (er-d.org) to additionally support those in Haiti who are suffering. Our Episcopal congregations are in the best position to support those in direct need through er-d.org.

With love and gratitude for all of you,

Jon+