



"I was a stranger and you welcomed me" – Matthew 25:35

When we welcome refugees, we welcome the refugee Jesus. Warned in a dream, Joseph and Mary took the infant Jesus to Egypt to keep him safe from Herod. At that moment, he and his parents became refugees.



Our recent observance of Holocaust Remembrance Day reminds us that our nation's record of welcome is far from perfect. Jewish refugees fleeing persecution were turned away from our shore during that time. On countless occasions since, however, our nation has provided succor for those fleeing persecution, war, and violence.

As this is being written, our nation, and we as Presbyterians, face another moment of decision. Will we welcome refugees in Jesus' name or will we go along with policies that would turn away those unable to remain in their homes and forced to seek safety and security in other nations, including our own?

This past week, the President signed an executive order that would halt refugee resettlement and would bar refugees from certain (mostly Muslim majority) countries entering the United States. Church World Service reports that the order suspends the US Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) for 120 days for all populations, indefinitely bars Syrian refugees from resettlement in the United States and does not allow entry into the country of

nationals from Iraq, Iran, Libya, Syria, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen (this includes refugees and people with Special Immigrant Visas) for the next 90 days. The premise is that this will protect us from terrorists.

Presbyterians, along with people of other faiths and people of good will, have responded that we will not give in to fear and we will follow the call of Jesus to welcome. In a January 28, 2017 statement, the Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson II, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) said “We stand ready to welcome our new neighbors, friends, and family of all faiths and nations.” [Read the statement](#). Resources follow to support Presbyterians who seek to practice welcome in Jesus’ name.

The Call of Our Faith

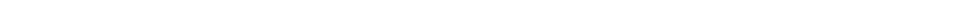
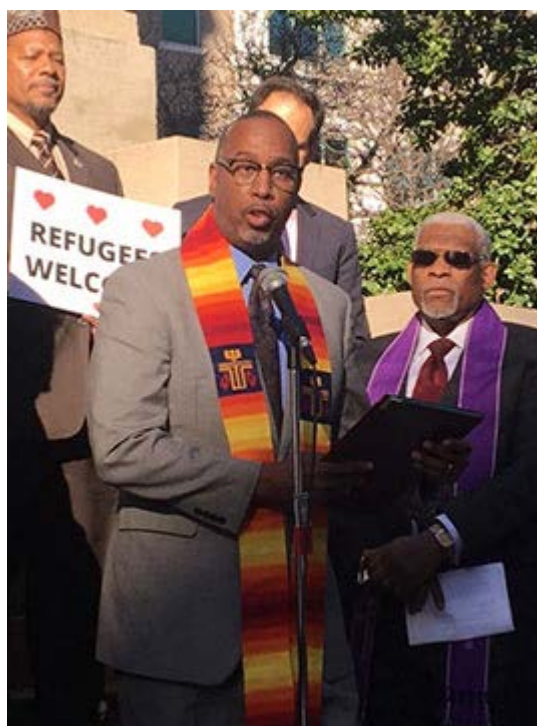
[#RefugeesWelcome](#)

– the Rev. Jimmie Hawkins, director, Office of Public Witness

[A Prayer after Restriction of Refugees](#) – the Rev. Dr. Laurie Kraus, coordinator, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

[A Tradition of Welcome](#)

– a short video by Presbyterian Disaster Assistance





Act/Give

- [Tell the White House and Congress](#) that you oppose the plan to halt refugee resettlement and to bar refugees from certain countries
- Create opportunities to gather for mutual support
- Attend a [#RefugeesWelcome Solidarity Event](#) near you—Refugees Welcome; the PC(USA) supports this coalition
- Support Presbyterian Disaster Assistance's ministries with [refugees facing emergencies](#).
- Support the [Fund for Obedience to Higher Authority](#) to provide assistance to those who suffer financial loss or difficulty as a result of moral acts of conscience.

Learn



[Executive Order FAQ](#) – compiled by Church World Service and other refugee resettlement agencies

[Refugee Screening Process](#) – U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

[Figures at a Glance](#) – UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)

Policy Base

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its predecessor denominations have consistently called the church to welcome refugees in the name of Jesus. This call began when the 160th General Assembly (1948) of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America called for the resettlement of persons made refugees and displaced by World War II and continued through the 222nd General (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [statement calling the church](#) to “respond to the ancient biblical directive to provide for the stranger and the sojourner.