

Notes of Meeting held on November 18, 2021

Attendees: Lesley MacKellar, Heather Barta, Armida Zapien, Carol Elvery, T.J. Freeman, Fatima Yakubu-Madus

Opening Prayer: Offered up by Armida Zapien and included below:

Strangers in a Foreign Land

Lord God, help us to remember those who tonight will go to sleep unfed and unwelcome, strangers in foreign lands, people who have fled for their lives and are far from their homes. We lift up to you those who are escaping persecution and conflict, having fled death, torture or ruthless exploitation.

So many carry wounds, mental and physical. So many have suffered greatly.

Lord Jesus, give us more of your compassion for their plight, soften our hearts to their situation, and help us follow your lead in seeking justice and mercy on their behalf.

We pray for an end to the wars, poverty and human rights abuses that drive desperate people to become refugees in the first place.

We give thanks for people working in troubled countries and ask for more of your blessing so we can bring life, dignity and hope to those that remain.

We thank you that you are Lord of all the earth and all its people are loved by you.

We pray these things in the name of your Son who was himself born into the troubled life of a refugee.

- *Author Unknown*

Announcements and Updates on Local News:

Lesley shared that Sally "Craig" Christensen had unfortunately had to step down as Co-Convener because of competing work priorities. She, nevertheless, hoped to continue as a member of the network. Armida has agreed to continue as our convener for the time being. Many thanks to Armida!

Lesley also reported on a webinar she attended that was hosted by the International Center of Indianapolis regarding various agencies work to support Afghan refugees who were being housed nearby at Camp Atterbury. There are currently 7000 individuals there and the greatest challenge was finding housing, particularly for large families.

Armida shared that she would be helping to welcome an Afghan family locally with Catholic Charities. Carol offered help from St. Mark's church to Armida.

TJ reported that he had also been in contact with Catholic Charities in Fort Wayne, Indiana and they had agreed to partner going forward. They have identified 15 parishioners who will help with a family locally and will house them in an apartment near the church.

Fatima said she was in discussions with some churches that were ready to help, particularly in Bloomington, Indiana. She also continues her discussions with Exodus Refugee in Indianapolis about the best ways to help.

Carol shared that Mo. Julie had campaigned for funds for Episcopal Migration Ministries and raised \$7,300.

Report on Dept. of Homeland Security Webinar: Carol recently attended a webinar conducted by the DHS on sponsor circles. She explained that this was a different way of helping Afghan refugees because resettlement agencies are overwhelmed. As of November 10th, there were

still 73,000 Afghans on military bases needing help with resettlement. She explained the process for becoming a sponsor and shared that there would be additional webinars on December 1st and 15th. For more details, talk to Carol and see this link:

<https://www.dhs.gov/allieswelcome>

Big Provincial Gathering: Armida reminded the group that Mo. Julie Hendrix of St. Mark's Wikapau, WI had presented at the previous month's meeting about migration ministry in general. She asked whether it would make sense to approach her about leading a workshop on this topic at the upcoming BPG. The group agreed this would be a wonderful idea and Carol Elvery agreed to find out her interest and availability.

Closing Prayer: Offered up by Armida Zapien and shared below:

Opening the Hearts of Many

We thank you for opening the hearts of many to those who are fleeing for their lives.

Help us now to open our arms in welcome, and reach out our hands in support.

That the desperate may find new hope, and lives torn apart be restored.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ who fled persecution at his birth

and at his last triumphed over death.

- *Author Unknown*

<https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/immigrants-and-refugees>

Next Meeting: January 20, 2022 at 8 pm ET/7 pm CT

Submitted by: Lesley MacKellar