Outreach Ministries Collaborate to Make All the Difference for One Refugee Family

By Kathryn McNamara, Refugee Ministry Chair

One of the amazing aspects of Christ Church’s Outreach efforts is the way in which the different ministries build upon one another.

The Refugee Ministry grew out of the realization that many Afghan refugees were visiting the Lazarus Ministry for emergency financial assistance with rent, utilities, and other necessities. Refugees who worked with the U.S. government in Afghanistan typically receive about 90 days of financial support upon arrival to the U.S. But through the Lazarus Ministry, our experience shows that 90 days is not sufficient time to secure housing, find a job that will pay a living wage, enroll in school, and settle into the community.

As a result, many refugee families are faced with the prospect of going into debt just to make ends meet. While the number of refugees entering the U.S. has decreased, the internal migration of families who were not successfully settled continues.

These facts were clearly illustrated at the Lazarus Ministry recently when we met an Afghan family who had been resettled in North Carolina and only just moved to Northern Virginia. The father, an interpreter who had been shot three times by Taliban militants as a result of his cooperation.

Despite continuing threats on their lives, the family endured a five-year wait for a visa. They tragically suffered the death of their young daughter shortly before they left Afghanistan. The town that was chosen by resettlement agencies did not have job prospects or a community that was prepared to welcome this Afghan family. Word-of-mouth reports were that Northern Virginia was a better prospect for refugees, so the family took a chance and arrived in Alexandria, sight unseen. They have thousands of dollars in debt to friends as a result of their move and have been sleeping on the bare floor in a small apartment.

The father heard about the Lazarus Ministry, and was fortunate to connect with Melanie Gray, who immediately recognized the need to refer his family to the Refugee Ministry. The Lazarus Ministry addressed the family’s urgent need and paid the family’s outstanding rent, while the Refugee Ministry connected them with furniture and housewares donations, and collaborated to bring together a team of volunteers to work closely with them in the coming months. The father was incredibly grateful for the assistance he has received, and told one of our volunteers that “in America, it doesn’t matter who you are; everyone is treated as human.”

We hope to live up to that ideal. We are grateful for the synergy of Christ Church’s Outreach ministries, which provide a helping hand to those in need in our community. In this family’s case, Christ Church is making all the difference.

To read more about the work done by Afghan interpreters, read the following article: https://warontherocks.com/2014/04/heroes-left-to-die/
Summer Fun at the Gift Shop

Now that summer is here, you’re undoubtedly reveling in classic summer activities—swimming, boating, traveling, bike riding, picnicking and more. News reports, however, have warned that bugs are just as bad this year as last year (and last year they were unusually bad) so whatever you do, be sure to take bug sprays with you wherever you go and whatever you do. The Christ Church Gift Shop sells extremely effective mosquito sprays by Thistle Farms for only $8.25. Aside from keeping mosquitoes at bay, Thistle Farms sprays help women recovering from prostitution, trafficking and addiction. Based in Tennessee, it is a social enterprise founded by women for these women in need, and the net proceeds from the sale of Thistle Farms products are donated to the organization. So buying Thistle Farms mosquito sprays will not only help you and your family avoid bug bites but it will also help women whose lives often don’t even include swimming, boating or even picnicking.

While you’re buying Thistle Farms mosquito spray, be sure to consider our stadium bags that are perfect for carrying your belongings to sports games, ball caps to keep the sun off your scalp, and Virginia trail mix to snack on at those games.

September 2019 Dates

Sunday, September 1........ Back to School Blessings at morning services
Monday, September 2 ........ Labor Day—Office Closed
Saturday, September 7 ....... Walk the Labyrinth 9:00 a.m.–Noon
Sunday, September 8......... Welcome Sunday
  Mengo Raffle Ticket Sales Start
  Baptisms at the 10:00 a.m. service

Wednesday, September 11 .. Covenant Class Begins
Thursday, September 12 ..... Choirs Begin Weekly Rehearsals
Sunday, September 15........ September All Parish Breakfast
Sunday, September 15........ First Day of Sunday School
Monday, September 16 ....... Bag Lunch Program—9:00 am (thru 9/20)
Thursday, September 26 ..... Fall Gathering—11:00 a.m.?
Generosity and Goodness

By the Rev. Dr. Noelle York-Simmons, Rector

Shortly after I began at Christ Church, our Director of Music, Jason Abel, let me know that Cap & Marilyn Bromley had given a generous gift to Christ Church to help with the purchase of a new organ. There was still more money to raise but the Bromley’s generosity allowed us to pursue the dream of upgrading our failing instrument.

Over the next two years, with my attention turned elsewhere, the idea of funding this magnificent new organ stayed at the back of my thoughts. More recently, as the organ committee has done its strong work and Harrison and Harrison has begun building The Bromley Organ in England, I started feeling very anxious about how we would finish paying for it in a relatively short amount of time. I consulted, I made appointments, I prayed (often!).

The clock kept ticking. The Finance Committee kept giving me the hairy eyeball. My faith in God and our community told me that this would work out, but Anxiety and its twin sister Doubt were crafty little monsters that kept showing up.

And then, one day last week, out of the clear blue, faithful parishioners let me know that they would like to make a large anonymous gift out of gratitude for our church and its ministries. They wondered if I had a project that needed funding.

And once again, Doubt and Anxiety were driven away by the generosity and goodness of people responding to the generosity and goodness of God and our parish. The Bromley Organ, a masterpiece of the artisan Harrison and Harrison Organ builders is scheduled to be installed in late 2020.

I am grateful to Cap & Marilyn Bromley for their generosity, their vision, and their patience. And I am grateful to our anonymous friends for their faith in the future of our parish. We are surrounded on all sides by a great cloud of witnesses on heaven and indeed here on earth.

Welcome Jeremy Means-Koss

By Jeremy Means-Koss, Seminarian

I am really excited and humbled to be joining Christ Church as your seminarian. Currently a Postulant in the ordination process, I belong to our very own Diocese of Virginia and as part of my formation I will be spending the summer here, full-time, immersed in many areas of church life including worship, mission and outreach, youth, contemplative practice, committee work and so much more. I’ve spend the past two and a half years at Wesley Theological Seminary and am excited to finalize my seminary experience at Virginia Theological Seminary this coming fall and spring. Before venturing into the rigorous academic study of theology, I received a Bachelor’s degree in Business and Communications from American University, and a Master’s degree in Cultural and Creative Industries from King’s College, London. I spent five years working in higher education and ten years in the hospitality industry as I made way through school and life. My husband and I live in Alexandria with an adorable, albeit old, Alaskan Klee Kai dog.

I’ve been deeply formed by both contemplative spirituality and gospel and contemporary praise and worship. But if you’re curious where to start in conversation, just ask me anything about Star Trek, Harry Potter, or practically any sci-fi/fantasy series and be prepared to take a leap down the rabbit hole. I’ve had the pleasure of meeting many of you already, but for those I haven’t met yet, I look forward to meeting you soon!
Out and About

Shrine Mont
Youth Trip

Wear Orange Day
Where Do You See God?

The Communications Committee invites parishioners of all ages to creatively answer the question “Where do you see God?”

We usually have the chance to do things differently in the summer. This may include travel for vacation or mission opportunities or being in community with neighbors for social and service opportunities. Wherever you go, you’re quite likely to see God in your daily life if you take a moment to look. Take a picture that illustrates where you see God, and email it to christchurchalexandria@gmail.com no later than August 16. Use “original size” as the option when sending via smartphone. Include your name and a written caption or brief explanation with your submission to explain where you saw God. (We may also use some of your submissions in printed or digital publications throughout the rest of the year.)

We will share your submissions in a gallery-style exhibit starting on Welcome Sunday, September 8, and it will stay up for a few weeks. We had 24 people submit items last year and we’d love to see more from parishioners this year.

Visitors to Christ Church Want You to Become a Docent!

Docents at Christ Church have greeted visitors from around the world for decades, sharing with them an appreciation of the role of the Episcopal Church throughout our nation’s history, as well as topics as diverse as building design, the Episcopal liturgy, and prominent Americans who regularly worshipped here. It is our docents who are the “face” of our church for visitors, and this is an important ministry of welcome.

A frequent comment, often from international visitors, is how remarkably welcoming we are, which makes a visit to Christ Church a memorable part of any vacation to the nation's capital region: “May I actually sit in George Washington's pew?” “Photographs are permitted?” Yes, even encouraged!

In addition to being dedicated to this important Church volunteer ministry, our docents also are often serious amateur historians, so able to enhance significantly any visit to Alexandria for many thousands of annual visitors. Our church welcomes visitors every weekday and Saturday, as well as Sunday afternoon, so there is excellent flexibility in scheduling new volunteers, who are usually asked to give tours a few hours every other week or so. Training is available. If you are interested, please contact Harley Thronson at hthr0ns0n1@gmail.com
Explore Your Call as a Christian Through Education for Ministry

By Ridge Multop, Education for Ministry Mentor

“EFM is life changing!” That was how one student described what Education for Ministry meant to her. And I completely agree! My experiences as a student and a mentor have changed my life by deepening my faith, allowing me to explore the hard questions, and showing me what “ministry” is all about in life outside the church.

Through the three components of EFM, study, prayer, and reflection, the education program provides the means to move toward a new understanding of the fullness of God’s kingdom.

Many people feel a need for education that supports their faith and also helps them to express that faith in day-to-day life. Education for Ministry is one way for them to satisfy that desire.

The EFM program is a course by the School of Theology of the University of the South at Sewanee that covers the Old Testament, New Testament, church history, and theological issues that we face in our lives. It is a four-year course of study, but can be taken one year at a time.

The seminar group is the nucleus of the Education for Ministry program. A group is six to twelve participants and a trained mentor who meet weekly over the course of a nine-month academic year.

There are weekly assignments to study with the help of texts and a Reading and Reflection Guide provided by the School of Theology, and in the weekly seminar meetings participants have an opportunity to share their insights and discoveries as well as to discuss questions which the study materials raise for them. Through discussion and guided reflection, the seminars provide an opportunity to deepen understanding of the reading materials.

The development of skills in theological reflection is even more important. The goal is to learn to think theologically. By examining their own beliefs and their relationship to our culture and the tradition of our Christian faith, participants can learn what it means to be effective ministers in the world.

We discover that our ministry is at hand wherever we turn by coming to terms with the notion that everything we do has potential for manifesting the love of Christ.

The third component of EFM is worship. As a seminar group we are supported by a life of prayer and regular worship which is an integral part of each week’s meeting.

The EFM group at Christ Church meets on Wednesday evenings from mid-September until early June. To explore joining the EFM group at Christ Church, or for more information, contact Ridge Multop at 703.609.9559 or Baritone58@gmail.com, or Rev. Lyndon Shakespeare at lshakespeare@ccalex.org.

---

Bread for the World—Members of Christ Church Lobby on Capitol Hill

By Nancy Carson, David Beckmann, and Doreen Kibuke-Misoke

Christ Church’s commitment to ending hunger was manifest in June as parishioners went to Capitol Hill to support improved global child nutrition. On May 26 Christ Church parishioners wrote letters as part of the Bread for the World (BFTW) Forum. BFTW is a non-partisan Christian organization that works nationally and internationally to end hunger.

BFTW’s network across the country is focused this year on achieving sustained and improved U.S. leadership of international efforts to reduce child malnutrition. The world has new knowledge of how best to reduce child malnutrition, and evidence-based programs have been spectacularly successful—reducing the number of stunted children in the world by 16 million over the last six years. Honduras, South Sudan, and Uganda—where Christ Church has mission partners—all suffer very high rates of child malnutrition, and the U.S. government is funding large nutrition programs in all of them. BFTW campaign will expand and improve these programs.

BFTW is building political interest in global child malnutrition through a bipartisan Global Nutrition Resolution in Congress and advocacy for a $100 million increase in appropriations. Christ Church’s offering of letters urged Senators Kaine and Warner and Representative Beyer to co-sponsor a resolution and help secure the resolution. On June 11, Christ Church joined 350 BFTW members from across the country in its annual Lobby Day. David Beckman, Nancy Carson, Dr. Bill Chin, Melanie Gray and Doreen Kibuka-Musoke presented the Christ Church letters. They spoke with staff members for Senator Mark Warner and Representative Don Beyer, and will be monitoring progress on legislation. Rep. Beyer has since become a co-sponsor of the legislation.

For more information or to learn how to get involved, please contact Doreen Kibuka-Misoke at dkibukamusoke@worldbank.org.
Sun, Sand and Christ Church’s Cash Flow
By Abas Adenan, Senior Warden

Cash flow is not something we typically consider while we are dipping our toes in the sand or jetting off to our summer vacation destinations. And Christ Church’s cash flow is certainly not something that comes to mind as we are struggling to remember if we turned off the iron or locked all the doors to the house.

However, it is something that is prevalent in the minds of your church leadership this summer. Recently, we have instituted a practice of sending the congregation updates on the church budget and if you have been paying attention, you understand that we are challenged by a revenue stream that does not quite support our expenses.

I know that Christ Church is a generous congregation. I know this because even as the number of pledging units fell again this year, the average pledge amount increased. I know this because Christ Church responded so well when we designated the Loose Plate offerings to special ministries.

However, as we are currently trending, Christ Church may end the budget year with another deficit and the clergy, vestry and finance committee continue to monitor finances closely.

Cash flow is extremely important during the summer months because many of us are on extended vacations or come to worship less and the action of dropping your pledge envelopes or cash in the collection plate just does not happen. In reality, the demand for some of our ministries increases, and the needs of our operational budget remains constant.

For example, one of the larger insurance payments was due in mid-July (it was paid). The need for the services provided by our support of some of our ministries such as Lazarus also increases in summer, as well as missions such as Our Little Roses and the youth mission trip.

We encourage our parishioners who have not yet signed up for regular electronic funds transfers to mail their regular offerings to the church office, just as you would your electric bill or credit card payment. After all, Christ Church still needs to pay its bills. Better yet, make the move to EFT. And if you have not yet made a commitment to Christ Church by...