

My Faith Community is Called to Respond to the Refugee Crisis... Now What?!

Thank you for considering ways your congregation might respond to the refugee crisis. The task ahead may seem daunting but, working together, we trust that we can make a difference!

There are many ways your community of faith can respond to the refugee crisis. Below are web links that may be helpful as you discern how your congregation can be involved.

From the **United Church of Canada** – a series of helpful links, including a section on the most frequently asked questions about refugee sponsorship. Also linked are an overview of the refugee crisis and a page on offering sanctuary to asylum seekers.

<http://united-church.ca/humanrights/refugees>

From German journalist group, **In a Nutshell** – a 6 minute YouTube video explaining the Syrian refugee crisis. Although created for European viewers, this video (or clips from it) could be used in a meeting, Bible study, or worship service.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvOnXh3NN9w>

From author, **Karyn Pickles** (as printed in the blog, PicklesInk) – this blog post includes a sample script that could help Sunday School teachers, youth group leaders, clergy and parents talk with children about the war in Syria and those seeking asylum because of the war.

<http://www.picklesink.com/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-the-syrian-refugee-crisis/>

From **United Church of Canada staffer, Jim Hodgson** (as printed in the Huffington Post) – an overview of the refugee crisis with practical tips for those wishing to sponsor a refugee or refugee family. Embedded in the document are links which connects to a chart estimating the costs associated with sponsorship and providing more specific information on sponsoring a refugee who is being persecuted because of their gender identify or sexual orientation.

http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/jim-hodgson/syrian-refugee-sponsorship_b_8085508.html

From the **Centre for Community Based Research** – an interdenominational guide to action (and accompanying video and PowerPoint presentation) outlining tangible ways communities of faith can support refugee work. From hosting meals for newcomers to offering English as a Second Language classes to bringing an uprooted person or family to Canada, this resource provides engagement opportunities for congregations with varying gifts, abilities and resources.

http://www.communitybasedresearch.ca/Page/View/Guide_to_Action

From **Canadian Council of Churches, Kairos Canada** and partner organizations – a Federal Election Resource to help us engage our candidates in dialogue about refugee rights. The document includes a brief synopsis of the issues facing newcomers to Canada and pointed questions we can ask of our candidates.

http://www.councilofchurches.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/CCC_FederalElectionResource_FINAL_WEB_REV.pdf

My Faith Community is Ready to Sponsor a Refugee or Refugee Family... Now What?!

Wonderful news! This journey will be both challenging and rewarding for your community!
Below are some links that will help you as you navigate the sponsorship process.

From **Citizenship and Immigration Canada** – a guide to the sponsorship of refugees program. This resource includes a glossary of terms, a breakdown of the process of applying for sponsorship, and frequently asked questions about sponsorship.

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/index.asp>

From the **Refugee Sponsorship Training Program** – on this webpage are links to the application forms to be filled out both by the sponsoring community and the refugee(s). Under the Training heading of the website are webinars and workshops that are open to anyone interested in learning more about the sponsorship process.

<http://www.rstp.ca/en/>

As you embark on this rewarding journey, you will find there are many resources available to you.

To begin the process of being matched with a refugee or refugee family, contact the **United Church of Canada** Refugee Program Officer, Khwaka Kukubo. Once a match has been made between your sponsoring community and a refugee or refugees, the United Church can assist you in filling out your application for sponsorship.
[refugees 'at' united-church.ca](http://refugees.at.united-church.ca)

For additional support, including interpretation services, contact **Wesley Urban Ministries**. Wesley staff speak more than 30 languages and are well-versed in the sponsorship process. To hire an interpreter or inquire about other services Wesley can provide, email wis@wesley.ca.

Once a refugee or refugee family arrives in your community, your local branch of the **YMCA** can provide support through the Employment, Training and Settlement Services department. The contact information is different for each geographic location so find more information by doing an internet search for YMCA settlement services and the name of your community.

For general inquiries, or to submit a resource you have found helpful, please contact Diane Matheson, **Hamilton Conference Minister for Social Justice**: dmatheson@hamconf.org.