

From the Bishop of Toronto

Dear Friends,

World Refugee Day is designated by the United Nations for June 20 of every year. But because June is already full of other observances that deserve attention, I have designated **Sunday, May 15, 2022, as the day when the Diocese of Toronto can give dedicated focus to the work of refugee sponsorship and resettlement.**

At the time of our first annual Refugee Sunday in May 2021, the world was already witnessing the highest levels of human displacement in history. According to the UN High Commission on Refugees, there are 82.4 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, nearly half of whom are children under the age of 18. We have all seen the videos, photos and headlines over the past year: Afghanistan falling to the Taliban last August; civil war ravaging Ethiopia; and most recently, Russia's continuing assault on Ukraine – not to mention ongoing conflicts in other parts of the world. The need is greater than ever.

Hospitality toward the stranger and foreigner is a theme that runs through Scripture. In the Torah, the people of Israel were reminded to welcome the stranger and sojourner, remembering their own history in the land of Egypt. Jesus, who as a child was himself a refugee, fleeing to Egypt to escape the evil King Herod, reminds us that to welcome the stranger is to welcome Him in our midst.

Canada is a world leader in refugee resettlement and was the first nation to offer the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program. What many may not realize is that this program started over 40 years ago when it was the churches that stepped forward to sign private sponsorship agreements with the federal government. Today, faith groups still make up the majority of the over 120 Sponsorship Agreement Holders in Canada. Here in our Diocese, we have been privileged to carry out this ministry for over 35 years in partnership with the Anglican-United Refugee Alliance, or AURA. AURA brings together refugees in need with parishes willing to sponsor them, and supports parishes through the sponsorship process.

In the past year, AURA and diocesan staff have worked together with Anglicans in our Diocese to provide even more support to parish sponsorship groups. There is now a Diocesan Refugee Network that meets regularly via Zoom to share best practices, offer mutual support and explore topics of interest. Occasional workshops offer an opportunity to delve into these topics more deeply. There is also an online bulletin board where members of the network can share everything from key documents to requests for and offers of furniture for newly arrived families. This network provides a way for parishes just embarking on the sponsorship process to learn from other parishes with years of experience, and fosters a sense of being united in a common endeavour across the

Diocese.

AURA staff and board members have collected a variety of resources you can share with your congregation this Refugee Sunday. Three new 20-minute videos offer a chance to meet and hear the stories of refugees who have been sponsored by parishes in our Diocese. Updated fact-sheets answer questions about AURA's work and the sponsorship process, while a compilation of prayers, litanies and hymn suggestions provide ways to remember refugees and displaced people in our worship. [You can find all these resources here.](#)

Please take some time to prepare for how you and your parish might recognize **Refugee Sunday on May 15**, with intentional prayer and reflection upon Jesus' call to us to welcome the stranger, to offer safe haven to those in need from around our suffering world.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Andrew Toronto".

The Rt. Rev. Andrew Asbil
Bishop of Toronto

“Permission to Survive” - Please use the following link to learn more about and, if you wish, sign an online petition from “One City Peterborough” concerning the ongoing plight of homeless people in Peterborough: <https://mailchi.mp/11dcdb87c22a/permission-to-survive?e=e2e727ac7f>

The Mammoth Sale will take place on **Saturday, May 28th** in the parish hall and, weather permitting, outdoors. Gently-used items for the rummage sale may be left in the front vestibule (now used as a storage area) of the parish hall. Please contact Clarke Mayhew or the parish office for more information. We have permission from the diocese to proceed with the sale and outdoor barbeque before the official start of the “Green Stage” (i.e., lifting of all Covid-19 restrictions on parish property).

“The Spirit Garden” -- Anglicans across the diocese are encouraged to support a special memorial at Nathan Philips Square in Toronto that honours the survivors of Canada's Indian Residential & Day Schools. You are invited to watch the Bishop's video on the diocesan website which explains the nature of and reasons for this memorial and explains the ways in which both individuals and parishes can contribute: <https://www.toronto.anglican.ca/news/bishop-urges-support-of-spirit-garden-project/>

In a time when war, freedom protests, autonomous weapons, and decolonization are daily news, what does the peace tradition of faith communities suggest for us today?

Now perhaps more than ever, peace requires serious consideration. Join people from around the world as we gather on **May 24, 2022, at 7 PM EDT**, for our **2022 Voices for Peace conference – *Blessed Are the Peacemakers***. Our featured keynote speaker — award-winning author and the publisher of Orbis books, **Robert Ellsberg**, will talk about what it is to create a culture of peace that embraces the radical vision of the Beatitudes of Jesus. Register online at: <https://www.livemeeting.ca/register/?meet=18719&rel=18825>

***From the Durham Northumberland Deanery Christian Education Team
Two online book groups (via Zoom)
on “The Dream of God” by Verna J. Dozier***

Five Friday mornings: May 27th - June 24th, 10.30 am to 12 pm

Facilitator: Suzanne Lawson

OR

Five Tuesday evenings: May 24th - June 21st, 7 pm to 8.30 pm

Facilitator: Val Whalley

Verna Dozier claims that the dream of God is to have us follow Jesus, not merely to worship him. Join others in a facilitated discussion of this “gem of a book,” dealing with one chapter each week. Let’s see what this “contemporary prophet” has in store for us to consider.

To Register, please email

Suzanne Lawson at suzanne.lawson145@gmail.com (for Friday morning sessions)

or

Val Whalley at valjwhalley@gmail.com (for Tuesday evening sessions)

***Please order your book online from Chapters/Indigo, Amazon, or another bookseller.
Before the first session, please read the first chapter and reflect on the questions set out in
the discussion guide at the end of the book.***

Resources for the on-going work of Truth & Reconciliation - from the the Anglican Church of Canada - for prayer, study, and action : <https://www.anglican.ca/orangeshirtday/>

Resources for understanding issues of Diversity and Race - from our diocese:
<https://www.toronto.anglican.ca/diocesan-life/diversity-resources/?lang=en>

Parish office hours: The parish secretary is usually in the office on *Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9 am to noon*. Please feel free to call (705-932-2233) during these times. For any important matter, please feel free to call the Priest-in-Charge at home at 705-932-1231. *If (and only if) his voicemail at home is turned off, please try his cell 'phone number at 705-313-9002.*

The Churchwardens continue to be extremely grateful and thankful for the generosity and faithfulness of parishioners and friends of our parish who are making an on-going effort to keep up their regular offerings.

In addition to making a weekly offering at church on Sundays, donations (for those who are not already on PAR) can be made in the following ways:

- ***By regular mail*** addressed to St Thomas' Anglican Church, P. O. Box 187, Millbrook, Ontario, L0A 1G0. ***Please be sure to use the post office box number - not just the street address - when sending items by mail.*** Cheques only please - made out to St Thomas' Church. *Post-dated cheques, for future contribution periods, would be welcome and very much appreciated.*
- ***By e-transfer from your bank account.*** Please call Gail at the parish office at or email her at cavmanparish@nexicom.net to arrange this.
- ***By pre-arranged 'drop off' at the parish office.*** Note: Please call in advance to let us know you plan to do this. Please ***never*** leave cash in the mailbox!
- ***By Pre-Authorized Remittance:*** If you wish to enroll in PAR, please call the parish office during office hours. An authorization form will be mailed (or emailed) to you.
- ***By using the easy and secure online donation link on our parish website.*** Charitable donation receipts are issued automatically on our behalf by Canada Helps. Here is the link: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/119202950RR0001-st-thomas-church/>