

*Ecumenical Leaders throughout Kentucky
Share This Statement of Welcome Regarding Syrian Refugees*

God is both refuge and strength for us, a help always ready in trouble

Ps 46:1 (New Jerusalem Bible)

Not unlike the days after September 11, 2001 and in World War II, we find ourselves faced with acts of violence. It is a very natural reaction to be afraid in the midst and aftermath of these types of acts, but we find that we are called, as followers of Jesus Christ, to remember that refuge for all people is found in God, and not in fear.

We continue to pray for all who died and were affected by the tragic acts that have rocked France, Lebanon and other sites throughout the world in these last weeks. We know though, that those who have fled war-torn Syria are truly in need of refuge. And in recent days we have heard some voices from state and federal leaders who no longer wish to allow these refugees forced from their homes the alternative of a safe haven in the United States, and even in our own Commonwealth. The children, women, and men of Syria are victims of terror, as well, and we strongly urge that Kentucky can continue to be a safe haven for refugees to begin their lives again, as Kentucky has been welcoming refugees from war-torn nations for many years.

It is always helpful to note that it usually takes a refugee 18-24 months to complete the extremely thorough screening process before a refugee from any country can enter the United States. We urge our government agencies to be as thorough as possible in these screening efforts, but we wish always to be a community that welcomes the refugee.

Kentucky is a Commonwealth that has been enriched by the lives of refugees being resettled here. Jesus, a refugee who fled to Egypt himself, calls us to welcome the stranger. We call on the leaders of Kentucky to continue to welcome the Syrian refugees who desperately need our help. God is the refuge and strength of all, and God empowers us to open our hearts and our doors to the ravaged refugees of Syria.

Faithfully,

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General Minister, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Kentucky

The Rev. Dr. Rhonda Blevins
Executive Coordinator, Kentucky Baptist Fellowship

Bishop Lindsey Davis,
Kentucky Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church

The Most Rev. Roger Foys
Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington

The Rev. Dr. William O. Gafkjen,
Bishop, Indiana-Kentucky Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Rt. Rev. W. Douglas Hahn.
Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Lexington

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The Rev. Dr. Peggy Hinds
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The Most Rev. William Medley,
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