

A RESOLUTION RESPONDING TO THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

In this season of Advent, as fear grows in our broken world, we feel called to hear the words spoken by God's messenger to Mary, as she feared what was happening to her and around her – "Do not be afraid...for with God nothing is impossible." (Luke 1:30,37) And we recall the words spoken in response by Mary, "Let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38)– even as she was asked to undertake and commit to something at great risk to herself.

In this season, as we focus on gathering in our homes and with our families, we are called to remember that the child Jesus and his family left their home, fleeing persecution, and arriving in Egypt as refugees. (Matthew 2:13)

In this season, as we light candles of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love, we are called to affirm with our lips and with our lives that "the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it". (John 1:5)

We, New Castle Presbytery, affirm our calling and commitment as followers of Jesus Christ to welcome the stranger and care for the vulnerable. In this moment, our voices of faith must speak louder than the voices of fear.

Remembering that the United States is a nation of immigrants, we call upon our state and national leaders to uphold our nation's historic values and commitment to inclusion, hospitality and opportunity for all. We affirm those leaders who choose justice and compassion over fear in responding to those affected by the Syrian war and global terrorism.

We call upon our congregations and communities in the States of Delaware and Maryland to join in seeking to protect and support Syrian and other refugees. We urge our faith communities to:

Pray for all, those seeking refuge and those in a position to offer welcome;
Study the issues surrounding the refugee crisis and the religion of Islam;
Advocate for national policies that uphold our country's commitment to welcome;
Engage in acts of hospitality and solidarity with Muslim neighbors in our own communities;
Pursue the resettlement of Syrian and other refugees within the bounds of our presbytery,
and other acts of compassionate response.

The Presbytery of New Castle directs the Presbytery Moderator and Stated Clerk to send this resolution to our congregations, to our state and federal legislators and governors, to President Obama, and to the media for a public witness.

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