



# Rejoice

July-August 2017

118 N. Washington St. ✉ Alexandria, VA 22314  
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## Racism: Why Now, Why Here

By Martha Wilcox

*Having spent the last year on a task force to discern whether the timing is appropriate for Christ Church to address the challenging, complicated, sensitive topic of racism, I was asked to express my conclusions to our Vestry.*

I believe Christ Church is in a prime position to address racism, and we should do it now, here and together.

**Now**—We have clergy who have the courage and the calling to take this on, this messy, scary, daunting, but righteous topic. This is a gift we should accept with gratitude and unwrap with haste.

The topic, made evident daily in the news and through social media, has been taken up by the national Episcopal Church, offering resources and programming to support congregational conversation.

**Here**—Christ Church, at the center of Old Town, offers a wonderful community where the line between the “haves” and the “have nots” is remarkably similar to the line between the whites and the blacks. Today, the life experiences of our white neighbors are far different from the life experiences of our black neighbors. It is a reality Jesus would want us to address.

Historically, our church began with moving blacks to the balcony, then moving blacks out to Meade Memorial and now, at least for me, moving the struggles of blacks out of my notice or conscious thought. Left to my own devices, I just don't think about racial inequalities very much.



But horrific news reports have made that change. I can't help but notice appalling injustices, now caught on camera, cruelties I would have previously thought couldn't possibly happen. We need to do something. I personally feel called to do something, but I don't know what that is.

I ask myself, “Martha, are you a racist?” And my answer is, “I don't think so, but maybe.” I'm not even sure what “racism” means. The more I learn about it, the less I'm certain. I want to understand it, I want to make a difference, even if it is just to become more enlightened.

**Together**—If we can't address racism at church, where can we?

I have witnessed the power of what we can do together when we tackle hard issues. How long ago was it

when we started talking about homosexuality? I confess that I didn't want to talk about it. It wasn't my issue, I wasn't interested. I didn't feel called to address it. I was uncomfortable, conflicted and resistant. But it turns out my church just plowed right on in without consulting me, and I'm so glad we did. I came to the forums open minded and a transformation happened. It wasn't overnight, but in time, I became educated, changed and, in the end, moved from resisting to advocating. Love wins.

The Edmund Burke quote comes to mind: “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” Let's be good men—and women, and transgenders—who do something. Together. For our neighbors and ourselves.



*Rejoice* is the official monthly publication of Christ Church, Alexandria, Virginia, an Episcopal church in the Diocese of Virginia.

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Christ Church embodies God's unbounded love by embracing, liberating, and empowering people, whoever you are and wherever you find yourself on your journey of faith.

The *Rejoice* deadline is the third of the month preceding publication.

Please email proposed articles to [mbracco@historicchristchurch.org](mailto:mbracco@historicchristchurch.org).

Those accepted are subject to editing for length and content. Susan Hahn edits *Rejoice* while Craig Keith provides design and layout. Carol Donlan gives her time and talent as an advisor. Meredith Bracco is the staff liaison.



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## Mengo Hospital Dental Clinic's Ken Chapman is 2017 Missionary of the Year

By Kay Grubbs, Christ Church Mengo Committee member

Dr. Ken Chapman, head of the dental clinic at Mengo hospital has been named "2017 Missionary of the Year" by the International Christian Medical and Dental Association. Dr. Chapman was presented the award April 29th at Black Mountain, North Carolina. His wife, Lynn and their two children Briana and Sophie attended. The family traveled from Uganda for the ceremony through the generosity of the association.

Friends of Mengo USA met Dr. Chapman more than 35 years ago and has supported him in various ways over the years. He has become one of our closest hospital staff members.

In addition to supervising the con-



struction of the new dental clinic at Mengo he has served on the board of directors and founded and continues to direct a postgraduate dental intern program at Mengo for recent Ugandan dental school graduates.

The Mengo committee on behalf of Christ Church and all parishioners congratulate Dr. Chapman on this recent award for all his good works.

## New and Unique Items Now in the Gift Shop

There's a little shop of treasures that's calling out to you for special summer gift giving occasions, the Christ Church Gift Shop. A plethora of new and unique items have recently been made available in the shop.

New parents or parents-to-be will especially appreciate the old-fashioned child's cradle handcrafted by the Rev. Pierce Klemmt, our former rector, renowned for his exquisite workmanship. This masterpiece is selling for only \$300.

Another new to the Gift Shop offering is beautiful antique jewelry from a local estate. You need to get to the Gift Shop soon if you love estate jewelry. It's moving fast! A lovely walnut double frame with a gesso and gilt inner frame that dates back to the mid-1800s is now available for just \$60.

Also among our new finds is a new photo collage poster of breathtaking Alexandria sites created by Christ



Church parishioner and graphic designer Craig Keith. The poster collage is just \$10.

Packages of notecards adorned with flowers in soft, watercolor shades by local artist Shirley Lawrence are also available. Proceeds from Shirley Lawrence cards go specifically to Christ Church's refugee outreach program.

Stop in, bring your summer guests, and while there, visit with our "staff" about becoming a volunteer. The Gift

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## Summer, Summer, Summertime

It's that time! The pools are open, the sunscreen is out, mosquitoes are on the rampage and the grill is ready to go! I hope you are heading to the beach or the mountains or somewhere you love to rest and recuperate for the year ahead. God rested after creating the world. Jesus encouraged the disciples to "come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." (Mark 6.31) If The Father, Son and Holy Spirit can manage to take a moment of vacation, I figure the rest of us can step out of the rat race for a few days.

Rest is not only good and holy, not only restorative, but *necessary* for our health and for our relationships. When we take time away from our daily jobs (even when we love those jobs!) and lavishly spend time rebuilding the connective tissue of our friendships and our family relationships, those relationships become more able to withstand the storms and trials we experience in the rest of



the year. the time we take apart also helps us reconnect with ourselves, to remember the good and holy within our own hearts and minds that can so often get lost in the din of the traffic of our daily lives. And finally—perhaps most importantly—when we slow down we can find ourselves reconnecting with God, whose wondrous work we can see in the majesty of the mountain, the pull of the tide,

the sleepy faces of our kids, and even in the incredible craftiness of those mosquitoes.

I look forward to seeing your photos and hearing your stories of where you've seen God's face on your travels and in your times of rest when you return from your travels. Go with God!

As your rector, I'm taking a brief point of privilege to remind you that while you and I and the church staff will take periods of vacation over the next couple of months, our utility bills, repair contracts, staff salaries, and emergency assistance needs do not take time off. Please continue to pay your pledges regularly so that we can keep our congregation running smoothly and have it ready for a strong fall (and so that your rector will not worry about finances on her own vacation). If your time of rest and reconnection inspires you to raise your pledge for the second half of the year, I will celebrate your inspiration and gladly accept your increase.

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*Gift shop continued from page 2*

Shop is staffed solely by volunteers, and we would love to have you join our hard-working, fun-loving team.

Proceeds from all Gift Shop sales support Christ Church outreach and mission ministries and related Alexandria and Episcopal charities: ALIVE!; The Campagna Center's Youth Services; Carpenter's Shelter; Christ Child Project; Community Lodgings; Episcopal Relief Fund; Lazarus Ministry; Meals on Wheels; and Our Little Roses (Honduras).

The shop is located at 121 N. Columbus Street. Hours: Sundays from 9:00 a.m. to 12 Noon, and Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



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## Stewarding Future Disciples

*By Tom Hahn, Chair, Stewardship Committee*

We are so blessed with God's many gifts that it is not always obvious how enriched and how responsible we truly are in our lives, opportunities, families, friends, communities, and freedoms. The breadth of God's gifts entrusted to our care offers up almost more opportunities to be faithful Christian stewards than I can often recognize when they are right in front of me. The essence of stewardship is using God's gifts to do the work He calls us to do. But when and how may I be so called?

A recent "when and how" arrived for me during the last week of June. I had volunteered as a vacation bible school craft leader. Our family had

welcomed our daughter's new baby girl just the month before. So I've been interested in refreshing some rusty child nurturing skills. It's been sometime since I taught Sunday school. Here was an opportunity to refresh adult and children relationship skills through hands-on facilitating of hand painting, clay modeling, and scratch pad art.

Truthfully, though, there was real anxiety on my part over whether I could be an appropriately knowledgeable facilitator with paint, clay and even concrete for garden stones. I was uncertain about whether I'd be able to patiently deal with rambunctious boys, shy girls, and groups of young children who didn't pay attention to what we were trying to tell them.

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# God's Presence

By Jim Lafley, Vestry Member

Jim Lafley is a member of the Vestry, an usher, and attends the eight o'clock service. After a career in HVAC, construction, and renovations, Jim went back to school and became an elementary school teacher. This is the second year that Jim has volunteered with Vacation Bible School, each time leading the Mission Matters rotation with our elementary school students.

**A**t Vacation Bible School in June we shared the plights of refugee families and Saints that were refugees as well. Among the Bible passages we read this week was my favorite from Matthew 25: 31-40:

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, **I was a stranger and you welcomed me**, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And



when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

I was inspired by our students' prayers in my class for Mission Matters. We discussed how Mary, Joseph and Jesus were refugees as they fled Herod's wrath. I modeled a prayer for what Joseph might have prayed for his family as they were about to leave the safety of their home. "Dear Lord please keep us safe and may we find food, water and shelter and keep us away from Herod's Army." We discussed "what would you pray to God for if you were or knew a refugee or for any other injustice you feel in your heart."

Their responses were so sincere and thoughtful that it sent chills up my spine. Here are a few of them:

"God please keep me safe through the darkest of days

and the lightest of nights."

"We pray that those suffering from violence of any kind, that they may find peace and calm."

"I pray that refugees will have a safe trip and pass no hurricanes, storms, and nothing dangerous."

"I pray for people who have a disability will be able to have someone to help them through the tough times."

"I pray for no tornadoes, I pray for peace on earth, I pray for no war, I pray for no running out of food."

"We pray for the homeless and anyone in poverty. May they receive help and find a better life."

"Keep all animals safe from pollution."

"I pray for peace on earth and for no wars."

*continued on page 5*

*Stewardship continued from page 3*

What about the sheer energy levels I'd need, especially when the fourth screaming group came into the room—on the third, fourth and fifth days—before we'd had a chance recover, much less clean up, after the last group?

Here is what I found. My confidence was humbly bolstered, my patience levels always raised, and even my energy sustained when I began to appreciate that I indeed was not shuffling children through assigned crafts, but that I was actually doing God's work.

By the end of the first day, I began to realize that our children are created in God's image and these chil-

dren are entrusted for too brief a time to our care to assist them into their callings as Disciples of Christ. When I began to understand this *stewardship* responsibility, my prior petty anxieties were put in their proper contexts! I'm not necessarily ready to sign-up as a Sunday school teacher next year, but I'm now very much further educated on my stewardship journey.

Enrich your spiritual journey by taking time to reflect on how God has recently called you further into your stewardship journey. Such reflection can be extremely rewarding because as Noelle every Sunday has us proclaim: "God loves a cheerful giver." Like God's gifts our stewardship callings are rich.

## Rites of Passage

### WEDDINGS

- Kristen DiPasquale & Joseph George Hainzer

### BAPTISMS

- Henry Griffiss Alexander
- Polly Conza Swaine
- Andrew Porter Henry
- Duncan James Finley
- Yuta Isaiah Newton
- Aiko Chloe Newton
- Matthew Takaya Newton
- Peter William Schertel
- Wren Afton Booth
- Colin Gregory Thomas Eright
- Pierce Jerome Enright
- Frances Emmons Bruns
- John Robert Grey V

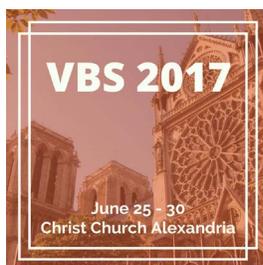
### DEATHS

- Whit Whitbread
- Dimitra Kondiles
- Nabra Hassanen
- E.A. Whorton
- Tom Grizzard

*God's Presence continued from page 4*

"I pray for the pets to be healthy and safe."

We have felt God's presence in our class of kindergartners through fourth graders. God has touched each and every one of us. Thank you to my Vacation Bible School students for showing me the Light, God's presence, and why I love to teach.



## Reflections on Preschool Mission Matters at Vacation Bible School 2017

*By Wendy Montes de Oca*

*Wendy Montes de Oca, a preschool teacher, baker of artistically decorated cookies, and full-time mom to Tony and Freya, and wife of Jaime, led the Preschool Mission Matters rotation this year. Here are some of her reflections on the Vacation Bible School experience.*

"I love being able to spend time with the kids! In Preschool Mission Matters we are a bit of their introduction into how to be little missionaries in their lives. There are little things that even these three, four, and five year olds can do throughout their lives that make them a part of God's kingdom around the world. Many of these kids are already participating in mission and outreach simply by sharing their toys or clothes that they have outgrown with those in need. They also talked about sharing food with others and what they like to share with the food pantry at church. The youngest campers do not really have a concept of different places around the globe but they do understand that they are part of a family in their house, their city, their state, their country, and the world.

"As VBS continued, we read from

three books to reinforce the message of being part of God's kingdom and helping others in the ways that we can.

*The Berenstain Bears Think of Those in Need*, by Stan and Jan Berenstain; *Pirates on the Farm*, by Denette Fretz; and *I've Got a Job to Do*, by Dandi Daley Mackall.

"It is important to share some Bible verses with the preschoolers, in addition to the memory verses that they learned each day in opening worship. We focused on two Bible verses and tied those into crafts and songs. We created mini-books and megaphones to help us think about ways to "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel" (Mark 16:15) as well as help others. We sang a verse from Hebrews 13:16 to the tune for London Bridge. The children's crafts could be shared by campers with their families to enrich the prayer life of the whole family. One of those was making Prayer Pots where each family member can take a turn to pray."

Wendy and Jim are among the more than 50 adult and youth volunteers who led Vacation Bible School campers as three Region IV parishes, Christ Church, Grace Church and Immanuel on the Hill, joined to take the young campers on a pilgrimage,

"Still Seeking the Kingdom of God." Many thanks to all of the volunteers and families who joined on the successful journey.

Enjoy a look back at VBS 2017 at: <https://ccalexvbs.wordpress.com/>



# Lunch Break Roulette: Our Facilities Team

By Santiago Rodriguez

The Christ Church facilities staff members reflect on working at our active 21st century parish in an historic campus.



**Arthur Miller**  
(Team member since 2010): We facilitate the sharing of God's love. I was a Lazarus

guest in the 90's. I joined the church in 2010. I love what Christ Church stands for. I love its rich history. But what I love the most is how Christ Church parishioners share their lives with others.

*Memorable experience:* I'll name two: giving the sermon one Outreach Sunday, and my first trip to Shrine Mont. I thought I was in the Garden of Eden. That first night was so peaceful. I had not slept so peacefully since before I went to Vietnam in 1967.

*Most challenging part of the job:* When people are ungrateful. Especially when some people who come to Lazarus take the help for granted. That gets me in the heart.



**Bryant Bland**  
(Team member since October 2016): Christ Church is a place where I am making new friends.

*What you like best:* The humans of Christ Church. The stories and personalities of the humans of Christ

Church. I enjoy meeting new people and getting to know them.

*Memorable experience:* I find humor and joy in a lot of things. I love seeing children running around the graveyards. It seems contradictory, but it's joyful. Most challenging part of the job: All-too-common facility mishaps on an already busy day. Things break and toilets get clogged, but it is a bit challenging dealing with them when you are trying to set up for another event.



**Gary Gilham**  
(Team member since October 2016): We are maintaining history. The history of Christ Church brought me here. I used to walk around and come

to the church as part of Old Town's Ghosts and Graveyards Tours. *What you like best:* It is exciting that Christ Church is so busy and it does so much. I like that everything changes all the time. There isn't much of a routine. Every day there are new challenges and events.

*Memorable experience:* I enjoy opening the eyes of people who did not know about the rich history of the church. People would say, "We thought this place was a museum." But then they see kids running around—that we are a living church. The church building is old (1773), but the church community is youthful.

*Most challenging part of the job:* The challenge of preserving and maintaining a historical building on a budget. I'm constantly playing catch-up, fighting time, and dealing with unforeseen conditions.



**Mustafa Hakim**  
(Team member since 2011): I'm proud to be working at George Washington's Church. I like meet-

ing different people. Everyone who comes here is unique. I like the history of the church. Learning that history from the people I work with. *Most challenging part of the job:* Getting everything done in a busy day – when there are only two FA's. It takes focus to make sure things keep happening in this very happening church.

*Memorable experience:* I treasure working here. I treasure the people I work with and the friends I've made. The laughter I shared with people like Abbas and Temesgen (two former FA's at Christ Church).

Happy  
10 year  
anniversary  
to the  
Rev. Ann  
Gillespie

## The Slow, Quiet Work of Prayer

By Rev. Heather VanDeventer, Associate Rector

Since the third Sunday of July 2016, a group of clergy and laity have come together to pray for peace, healing, and unity in the city of Alexandria. We started this prayer circle in response to some local gang violence in the North Old Town neighborhood, right in the midst of the Arthur Adkins homes. The first killing that year was on June 8, when Pierre was killed close to what I call the Big Tree.

A few weeks later, over the Fourth of July weekend, Saquan was killed a block away in a reprisal killing. Saquan is one degree of separation from Christ Church, as his mother, Patrice Hall, has been a long-time volunteer with the Christ Child Ministry, connecting Christ Church to the needs of the Boys and Girls Club families. While I did not know of Pierre, I did know of Saquan.

Another week passed and the Clergy Council, a group of faith leaders in the city, was gathered by Mayor Allison Silberberg to build relationships prior to a disaster or problems in the city, such as these killings. The Clergy Council discussed how we might respond to systemic issues within the education system and for the youth and young adults of Alexandria. But we also sought a way to respond to the pain in that neighborhood in particular.

In the time since the killings, I had been praying and seeking ways to respond and felt that a prayer circle was the response we needed. At the Clergy Council, Greg King, then senior pastor at Russell Temple CME, said he would go to pray the following Sunday and I said that I would join him. We had close to 50 people present at the first prayer circle. Pastor King and I felt the Holy Spirit moving us to keep it up. So, we did. Pastor King was called to serve a congregation in Richmond about a month later but other clergy and lay leadership members have stepped up to share in leading the circle.

This past year, we have met and prayed under the Big Tree every Sunday except for Christmas and Easter. At the low points, only one person has been there to pray. Usually there are three to five people there; on occasion, someone from the neighborhood joins the circle. Some parishioners from Christ Church have joined the circle at different seasons of their prayer life. The group of regulars represents Christ Church, Church of the Resurrection, Good Shepherd Lutheran (ELCA) Church, and Russell Temple CME. We decided last fall to convene weekly in this prayer circle. We discerned our work was that of prayer, just prayer, and not setting up new programs for those in the neighborhood. We point to efforts by the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority,

the schools, and the rec centers, but our work is that of prayer.

On the second Sunday in June, a cousin of Pierre joined the circle. He was cleaning up the trash that was mixed in with the memorials at the base of the Big Tree. We told him what we were doing there and invited him to join the circle. After sharing his story of the neighborhood and leaving the neighborhood, he joined the circle. The next week, he brought his kids and a friend and her kids. They came back the next week.

It has been our hope that those in the neighborhood would join the prayer circle and our prayers for peace, healing, and unity in the neighborhood and across the city of Alexandria. This is slow work that runs on God's time.

Paul writes in First Corinthians, "So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building." (3:7 – 9) This is God's growth on Montgomery Street. Our prayer circle will continue to gather weekly for the summer. Once the fall comes, we will discern whether to continue weekly or monthly. Our sense is that our slow, quiet work of prayer is not yet done.

*Gracious and Loving God, we pray for peace, healing, and unity to come to a place where blood has been spilled. Pour out your Spirit, that we may learn to live in ways of righteousness with each other, to speak the truth in love, and to become peacemakers. All this and more we pray in your Holy Name. Amen.*

*Save the Date!  
Welcome Sunday  
September 10*

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# From a Baseball Field in Del Ray to a Desert in South Sudan

By Nancy V. Knapp

Life in Alexandria changed on the morning of June 14, 2017, as hatred and violence visited a dusty baseball field less than two miles from Christ Church. That evening, in a service of lamentation, healing, and hope, our Rector, Noelle, preached a passionate reminder that nothing can separate us from the love of God. In her prayers, Noelle remembered others who are scarred by violence every day, for whom the Del Ray shootings are not news. Among them are our mission partner, Bishop Joseph Garang Atem, and his people in the Diocese of Renk, who call another dusty expanse in South Sudan home.

Prayer is the heart of our covenant relationship with the Diocese of Renk. On September 11, 2001, Bishop Joseph's predecessor, now Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul, happened to be at Christ Church. As we struggled for how to process our grief and for

how to pray, Bishop Daniel stepped in with a message of comfort and encouragement for a better tomorrow. In our weekly mission prayers, we remember Archbishop Daniel, Bishop Joseph, and the people of Renk, who continue to endure great hardships. Less than three years after achieving independence from Sudan in 2011, civil war broke out in South Sudan. The resulting violence has forced Bishop Joseph, some of his priests, and their families to spend time in Nairobi and other parts of Africa. Those who remain in Renk, including refugees from Sudan, face daily challenges of living, including scarcity of medicine and supplies in the medical clinic built by Christ Church in 2007.

By the grace of God and with help from you and the Estate of Caroline Virginia Meirs, Christ Church recently made a generous financial donation to help Bishop Joseph upgrade his di-

ocesan communications network and restock the medical clinic. With improved network capability, Bishop Joseph can connect more often with his priests, who rely on his pastoral leadership. With a fully stocked clinic, Dr. Paul can provide material health care and treat malaria and typhoid.

Bishop Joseph plans to visit the United States in October, along with his wife Roda and their 12-year-old twin daughters Grace and Michelle. At Bishop Joseph's request, we are planning a forum during which we can engage on issues of peace and reconciliation in difficult times. During his visit, we also plan to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our covenant relationship with the Diocese of Renk.

To learn more about our covenant with the Diocese of Renk or to help with logistics around Bishop Joseph's upcoming visit, please contact Nancy Knapp at [NVKnapp@aol.com](mailto:NVKnapp@aol.com) or 571-212-4581.

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## World Refugee Day

By Susan Kocsis, Refugee Committee

*This is my church in whom  
I am well pleased.*

This was the thought and the emotion I had during and after the special service on June 26 that recognized and welcomed Refugee and Asylee families to Christ Church.

I had to pinch myself to keep from crying as I watched Muslim girls and women from Afghanistan walk to the front of the church alongside parishioners, because all are welcome to the table, to receive Communion for the first time in their lives.

I watched in awe as parishioners, young and old, welcomed and embraced the Afghani university student who told us about having to leave her home and stop her education when her family experienced a tragedy that necessitated their leaving Afghanistan.

We collectively cheered-on the 11-year-old girl from Pakistan who tentatively read a passage from the Old Testament. She barely spoke English two years ago upon arriving in the United States.

Women wearing hijab; an African family from Eritrea; men and women who spoke little English—all were welcomed by the Christ Church community on Sunday. The father of the Afghani university student wrote that he could not remember ever feeling so much peace anywhere as he did in church last Sunday.

Acceptance. Embracing those who are different from us and those who worship differently than us. Having the courage to be compassionate when it isn't easy.

This is the world I want to live in. And we made it a reality here that Sunday. It can be this way.

The Christ Church Refugee Ministry is producing one miracle at a time, one family at a time. The needs are great, and so are the rewards. We welcome your participation.