

EMM Liaison
Newsletter #5
Province II

Welcome your new neighbor
and help inspire a more
compassionate world



Welcome to our fifth newsletter, bringing you information about Episcopal Migration Ministries as well as what we in Province II are doing in an ever-changing refugee landscape.

In this issue we bring you information about the Prayer Vigil, held on the 13th of January, in which almost 4,000 Episcopalians attended. The service was to remember those who died due to immigration enforcement or while in detention -- to mourn, to lament and to remember. **Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe** and **Minnesota Bishop Craig Loya** both gave impassioned appeals to remember that Jesus is with us and that we, as followers of Jesus can “turn the world upside down by mobilizing for love.”

We hear from **The Rev. Sarah Shipman**, Director of Episcopal Migration Ministries about her views of the past year, what changes have happened to EMM, where EMM is now heading, and where we can find hope.

We also speak with **Gale Hall**, a retired professor of early childhood education and a very active member of the Episcopal Migration Caucus. Listen to her journey and the new course she is spearheading: Sacred Journeys: Forced Migration and Welcoming the Stranger. The goal is to understand forced migration from the perspectives of children and their families and develop empathy toward those seeking asylum in our country, then figuring out how to respond with action on their behalf.

Spotlight

Prayer Vigil

Almost 4,000 Episcopalians attend a prayer vigil on the 13th of January, a welcome balm for our very weary souls. What was particularly moving were the thousands of prayers that were put in the chat box, showing how deeply we have been affected and how deeply we care. The church is called to make a stand, disrupting anger with love instead of cruelty. We are in this together.



Presiding Bishop Rowe encouraged everyone to continue “resisting,” “advocating” and “bearing witness.” “I don’t know about you, but there were a few questions where I wanted to say, ‘OK, God, but ... how hard do I have to, exactly, persevere in resisting evil? Because it seems like evil might have the upper hand these days, and we’re tired. Do I have to serve, seek and serve Christ in all persons – all of them?’” Rowe said, invoking the Christian promises contained in the [Baptismal Covenant](#). “Jesus is with us, and the Holy Spirit is guiding us, and the kingdom has drawn near even when we are beset by rage and despair and we absolutely cannot see it.” You can listen [here](#) for more of what the Presiding Bishop had to say.

The Rt. Rev. Craig Loya, the Bishop of Minnesota, emphasized the following: “We are going to make like our ancient ancestors, and turn the world upside down by mobilizing for love. We are going to disrupt with Jesus’ hope. We are going to agitate with Jesus’ love. Not because we are weak or not because we have given up. And for God’s sake not out of some naïve wish that everything will be just fine when it is so obviously not fine. We are going to choose to turn the world upside down with love because we know, we know, the cross of Jesus Christ settles forever. That love is the most powerful force for change and healing in the universe.” You can listen [here](#) for more of his homily.

Below are links:

- Prayer Vigil [order of service](#).
- media coverage of the vigil from [Religion News Service](#), [Episcopal News Service](#), [Premier Christian News](#), and [ChurchTimes](#).
- [Learn more](#) about how to support the work being done for migrants by the Episcopal Church in Minnesota.

- The Episcopal Church’s [Immigration Action Toolkit](#) offers advocacy tools and multiple resources for those seeking to support vulnerable neighbors.
- Find practical resources, training links, and downloadable prayers, songs, and readings in the church’s “[Protesting Faithfully](#)” toolkit.
- Consider donating to EMM. Here is the [link](#).

The Prayer Vigil took place after the killing of Ms. Renee Good, but before the killing of Mr. Alex Pretti. Episcopal leaders are calling to de-escalate deployment of federal immigration authorities to American cities. More information is in this ENS news [article](#). A statement from Bishop Loya gives us hope: “Vast networks of care, compassion, and solidarity, organized by churches to deliver food and supplies to those who cannot leave their homes,” Loya said. “People are documenting the violence being used against us in a way that puts their own lives at risk. ... A rich web of underground care and hidden love is taking deep root, and it’s amazing to think what fruit that might bear when this occupation ends.”

Presiding Bishop Rowe wrote to the church: “Death and despair do not have the last word. This is God’s call to The Episcopal Church now, and it is not an easy one. In the United States, we no longer live in a time when we can expect to practice our faith without risk, and we are confronting what vulnerable communities of faith have experienced for generations. Our right to worship freely as one church, committed to the dignity of every human being, has been curtailed by the fear that too many immigrant Christians face when they leave their homes. Peaceful protests, a right long enshrined in the Constitution, are now made deadly. Carrying out the simple commands of Jesus – feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, visiting prisoners, making peace – now involves risks for the church and grave danger for those we serve. As Christians, we must acknowledge that this chaos and division is not of God, and we must commit ourselves to paying whatever price our witness requires of us.” His letter is [here](#).

Bp. Rafael Morales Maldonado of Puerto Rico, along with many other bishops, echoes the desire for hope: “When we contemplate these realities, we often feel powerless. However, we are not without hope. Our gaze must always be directed to Christ and his Gospel, because it is from there that all our answers will come.

May God grant us a compassionate heart, courageous and committed to life, justice, and peace”. His video is [here](#).

The Rev. Sarah Shipman, Director of Episcopal Migration Ministries



What changes have the last twelve months brought to EMM?

In the last year, EMM has undergone tremendous change. Just a few examples:

Together with the Public Witness team, EMM hosted our first Immigration Webinar on 1/7/25, the day after the inauguration and have hosted them almost every week since. These updates offer information about the seemingly endless changes to US immigration policy and how the church is responding, legal updates on the myriad of litigation about those policy changes, resources for use across the church to offer support of immigrant neighbors, panel discussions regarding diocesan responses, and information about the UN immigration activities and the church participation in those efforts.

In May, TEC announced the end its forty year participation in the U.S. refugee resettlement program, with the wrap up of almost all related activities by 12/31/25; adopted a new mission of supporting communities, addressing global migration and advocating for the rights of all migrants and developed and implemented a process for connecting with dioceses, congregations, parishes, and other partners to provide technical resources and staff support in the event of an emergent immigration crisis or activity. Following the conclusion of federal resettlement programs, EMM is repositioning as a resource hub and convener—equipping congregations, strengthening partnerships, and amplifying the church's witness.

What is the outlook for EMM in 2026?

We hope to grow the Episcopal Migration Response Network and offer additional training opportunities to assist in expanding or developing local migration ministries across the church, building on both the work of the ERMN as well as what we are learning as we provide diocesan and local support in crisis situations. Additionally, there will be increased collaboration with the Global Partnership team to support those migration ministries that are in Episcopal communities outside of the United States.

Where do you see glimmers of hope in all this sadness and cruelty we are experiencing?

I have been beginning each day lately with the words of 1 John 3:17-18: "How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's good and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses to help? Little children, let us love, not in words or speech, but in truth and action." And at the end of each day, I say a prayer for all of the places across the church I saw that happen that day. The list grows each and every day. Additionally, the number of people across the church who attend the weekly calls and the EMRN meetings continues to grow, which tells me that more and more people are willing to roll up their sleeves and support their neighbors. In the midst of grief and fear and anger, Episcopalians are searching for ways to put their faith into action. That gives me hope.

Sacred Journeys: Forced Migration and Welcoming the Stranger



Gale Hall moved from New Hampshire to southern Arizona in 2016. Seeing the immigration stories told in the artwork of children staying at migrant centers transformed her. A life-long quilter, she began making quilts to welcome and comfort these children who were legally seeking asylum in the United States. Out of this came a book: *Lili's Quilt: A story of Immigration, Welcome and Belonging*.

Gale talks us through how God has led her on an incredible path. Listen [here](#) to her story and the wonderful course she is piloting. It explores why people left their home countries, their journey to the U.S., experiences at the border and in detention, and how they are welcomed in their new country.

If you are interested in participating in the pilot program (currently there are 9 cohorts), please contact Gale at joyfull721@gmail.com.

They say you can never fully understand a person without walking in their shoes. If you have not had an opportunity to talk personally with a forced migrant or listened to their stories, here are some books that Gale recommends that will put a personal face on these refugees and asylum seekers.

Books for Adults:

- [Beyond Welcome](#) (Centering Immigrants in our Christian Response to Immigration) by Karen Gonzalez
- [Detained](#) (A Boy's Journal of Survival and Resilience, journals starting when the author is 13, leaving Honduras with his cousin, and at 14 when he was in detention in Texas) by D Esperanza

Books for Children (that adults should listen to)

- [Hear My Voice](#) (Testimonies of Children Detained at the Southern Border of the United States) by Warren Binford
- [Lili's Quilt](#) by Gale Hall
"My mama came home, a tense look on her face, 'Pack quickly my dear, for we must leave this place. Take only what fits in your purple backpack. Choose carefully since we may never be back.'"
- [You Weren't With Me](#) (helping parents and children talk about difficult separations) by Chandra Ghosh Ippen

**Thank you for your support and all that you do to
welcome our newest neighbors!**

Mission: Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) is a key program within the Division of Public Policy, Partnership and Witness. Through EMM, we support dioceses and ministry networks around the church in responding to global migration, serving communities, and protecting the rights of all migrants.

EMM focuses on serving communities that help vulnerable migrants, addressing global migration and protecting the rights of migrants through education and advocacy.

Your Province II EMM-Liaisons

Janet Day-Strehlow



José Delgado



Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe *Director of Communications for the Diocese of Puerto Rico*

We hope that you will not only be inspired by the stories shared, but that you will share your stories with us. There are 13 dioceses in Province II and we want to hear from you. **One of our goals is to be able to get parishes/people in touch with one another and start networking.**

Please contact jdelgado@episcopalpr.org and jdaystrehlow@episcopaleurope.org with those stories, questions or feedback you may have.

According to UNHCR, there are approximately 122 million people who have been forced to flee their homes, 73.5 million are internally displaced. There are around 8.4 million asylum seekers globally and 5.9 million in need of international protection. For more details, take a look at [UNHCR Refugee Statistics](#) – we are seeing the highest levels of displacement on record.

Given enormity of the situation, we often hear the question “what can I/we do?” when looking at the current reality we live in. You may not be a large congregation with programs already in place, you may be looking for a way to help and make a difference. We hope that these stories will get you curious, light a spark or find new ways to expand existing programs. There are lots of links in this newsletter, so please take a look at them and think about how you can make a difference.

Important Links

EMM: [EMM](#)

OGR: [OGR](#)

Register for Webinars and Calls

Public Policy, Partnership, and Witness

Under the direction of Rebecca Linder Blachly, Public Policy, Partnership, and Witness includes ecumenical and interreligious relations; Episcopal Migration Ministries; global partnerships; and the Office of Government Relations. This week's updates include:

- **Public Witness Weekly Prayers and Zoom service**

Join us in and share **these weekly prayers**—available in English, French, and Spanish—for vulnerable communities as we seek God's guidance to ground us and to discern how each of us can respond. **Join by Zoom each Monday at 11:45 a.m. ET** to hear the prayers aloud, in the context of a simple liturgy, prayed by members of the Community of Francis and Clare. **Find all prayers and search by topic [here](#).**

- **Episcopal Public Policy Network (EPPN) Action Alerts:** Join Episcopalians across the church in the ministry of public policy advocacy through EPPN Action Alerts. **Click on an alert;** provide your basic contact information; and a pre-written email will be sent to your U.S. senators and representatives urging them to take action on critical legislative and policy issues. **Sign up to receive alerts.**

Recurring calls

- **Episcopal Church Immigration Calls, 1-1:30 p.m. ET Tuesdays:** Join to learn about the changing landscape of U.S. immigration, refugee, and migration policy. Episcopal Migration Ministries will share updates and resources and be joined by the Office of Government Relations and the chief legal officer. Spanish interpretation is available. **Register [here](#).**
- **Companions in Mission: Global Partnerships monthly calls, 1- 2 p.m. ET first Wednesdays:** Join these calls to hear from The Episcopal Church's Office of Global

Partnerships staff, Anglican Communion speakers, foreign policy experts, global mission practitioners, and others about opportunities for greater global engagement with partners across the communion. Spanish interpretation is available. [Learn more and register.](#)

- **Episcopal Public Policy Network/Office of Government Relations weekly calls, 1-1:30 p.m. ET Thursdays:** Join this weekly call to stay updated about the policies and legislation we are advocating for with Congress and the administration. Office of Government Relations staff provide an overview of the political environment and legislative outlook, offer advocacy tips, and answer questions. [Register here.](#)
- **Churches for Middle East Peace weekly calls on Holy Land conflict, 10-10:30 a.m. ET Thursdays:** Join weekly briefings hosted by Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP), of which The Episcopal Church is a founding member and active on the board. CMEP mobilizes Christians in the United States to advocate for equality, human rights, security, and justice for Israelis, Palestinians, and all people of the Middle East. [Learn more and register.](#)

EMRN meeting: [Join Episcopal Migration Response Network - Formstack](#)

EMRN Second Monthly Meeting: [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)