EMM
Liaison
Newsletter
#8
Province II

Welcome your new neighbor and help inspire a more compassionate world

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

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. Please look at the Office of Government Relations webpage on Migration, Refugees and Immigration here as well as the Immigration Action Toolkit.

The Episcopal Church continues to support and to advocate for immigrants and asylum seekers. Our Church is a home to refugees and asylum seekers and we continue to walk alongside those in need.

There is so much going on in the world these days, that it can be difficult to focus or you ask yourself if anything you do will make a difference. The answer is a resounding YES, it all makes a difference. And if you are unsure what you can do, please reach out to us, to EMM, attend one of the EMM Tuesday calls and/or join the Episcopal Migration Response Network. And continue to pray.

Key messages are don't be silent and please advocate for what you feel is right.

Spotlight

We are focusing in this issue on Detention Centers and children affected by either being themselves detained or having their parents be detained. It is important that we are aware of what is going on in the detention centers. Even if you are unable to go to a prayer vigil at a detention near you, there are ways of making your voice heard.

Did you know that approximately 6200 children were placed in ICE detention since January of 2025, including infants and toddlers? The average age is 7, with an average stay in detention of 6 months (Marshall Project, CBS News, Border Report, Propublica). Gale Hall talks about what her church is doing. We want to spread the word.

Time Magazine just published an article on the Rev. Vidal Rivas of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Hyattsville, Maryland. Rev. Rivas first came to people's attention when he became a guardian to two children, whose mother had been held in detention for four months. Here is a link to the ENS article from February 2026. He has now signed up to be a standby guardian for another 29 children.

We also have a report on what is happening at Delaney Hall, something we have talked about in the last few issues. We focus on Delaney Hall as it is in Province II, but please don't forget the cruelty and inhumane treatment of detainees is happening in other detention centers too.

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Gale Hall is a retired professor of early childhood education and a very active member of the Episcopal Migration Caucus. She talks with us about the "Paper Doll Campaign." Click here to watch the video.

In quoting from their toolkit:
"The Faith, Justice and Action Ministry at Oro Valley Church of the Apostles has begun a mailing campaign that advocates for children who are incarcerated in ICE detention. It has been our experience in talking about this issue with people that many simply do not know what is happening." Here is a link to the Migration Ministries page of Oro Valley and a link to the toolkit itself.

"This project was inspired by the "Paper Dolls to Free Families" campaign developed by the National Coalition to End Family and Child Detention."

"Our campaign builds on this by including the actual words from the children experiencing ICE detention. By sharing their stories, we hope to help others "see these children into existence" make sure they are not forgotten, and seek their release."

The Paper Doll Toolkit has everything you need – outline for the paper doll, quotes from the children, sample letters to send to your elected officials. This is something that every church can do. Imagine setting up tables at Coffee Hour, cutting out paper dolls, writing the words of the children who were/are in detention, and sending them off to your elected officials over a number of weeks. You can then follow up with those officials, maybe even set up appointments and stop by their offices. If you decide to do this, please let us know, we are hoping to make it nationwide.

Please take a look at our interview with Gale, her passion for what she does jumps off the screen. She has also written an article for an early childhood magazine entitled: "Seeing children into existence: Ending Ice Detention of Children and Families". Here is a link to the article.

Here is a link to Gale's webpage and to information about her children's immigration book: Lili's Quilt, winner of Best of Category - Youth Under 12 in the 2025 Arizona Literacy Awards.

The Rev. Vidal Rivas

Rivas grew up in El Salvador during a difficult era. He became a priest who was an advocate for social justice, but was detained, beaten and hospitalized. He came to the US in 1998. And has been at St. Matthews since 2008. He feels morally obligated to help parishioners who battle immigration issues. There is a sign inside the church which says in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole: "We love migrants" and this congregation embodies that statement.

The Rev. Rivas is now a standby guardian for 31 children (standby guardianship helps prevent the children of those immigrants who are detained from going into foster care). Doing this is absolutely critical, as it is uncertain if the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Salvadorans will be extended or not.

Please read this incredible story from Time Magazine (author is Philip Wang) here.

Delaney Hall

Starting in late May, demonstrators have been outside the privately-operated Delaney Hall immigration detention center in Newark, NJ, where detainees were on hunger strike.
The following is an update from Kathy O'Leary of Pax Christi NJ. The Episcopal Church works closely with Pax Christi.

"Dear Friends,

I wish I had better news for you, but things just got much worse for the visitors - again.

GEO hardened the area outside the facility where visitors are waiting again last week and over the weekend. There is now an additional layer of concrete barriers and chain link fencing. The visitor's shelter is between that new line of fencing and the original gate. It is completely surrounded by concrete barriers and chain link fencing. People have to wait at the edge of the driveway to be let in to get to the shelter. They are then locked in without access to bathrooms.

We are not able to bring the visitors water, portable misting fans or ice packs as we did previously when it is particularly hot out. We also can not bring them chairs.

GEO has not replaced the benches in the shelter that they removed at the end of May. They have not provided any other seating for the visitors. This past Thursday, Geo held people outside for more than an hour before they let them into the gym. The gym has only a handful of chairs.

GEO has also not increased the visiting hours to what they were before the hunger/labor strike **when they were cut in half.**

I was also informed by a GEO guard that ICE is in charge of approving the list. That may account for the wait time of seven days or more to get placed on the list. That also means that **ICE has the personal information of everyone who is coming to visit.**

Conditions inside continue to be poor. GEO and ICE continue to deny people medical care. Prescription medications are either not given at all or not given as prescribed. Dental care appears to be unavailable to multiple people with tooth abscesses and necessary medical operations are denied to others.

Food continues to be poor in quantity and quality. We recently had another report of worms in the food.

While this is all disheartening, the visitors will persevere. They will continue to show up for their loved ones and **we will continue to show up to accompany them and provide whatever support we can.**

Your donations help make our work possible.

Grocery store gift cards are still at the top of the list of needs**. The best cards to give are Shoprite and Stop & Shop.** You can bring gift cards to the radical hospitality tent during **visitor support hours** or donate to the gift card fund here **Givebutter.com/GroceryCards**

We are also in need of **size 7 diapers.** There is some kind of nationwide shortage on this size. We are well stocked with all other sizes. **Target brand is one of the cheapest available on size 7 diapers**. There is free in-store pick-up regardless of the number of packs and free shipping with the purchase of just 2 packs.

For the tent our greatest need is **umbrellas.** Five Below has **umbrellas on sale for $5.00 each.**

You can ship diapers and umbrellas to Pax Christi NJ c/o Kathy O'Leary, 151 Division Ave, Millington, NJ 07946.

Below is the complete list of items for donations that you can drop off during **visitor support hours**. The shelf stable items we assemble into pantry bags for visitors and for people who were released.

Any excess is shared with the **Newark Water Coalition** that does twice weekly food distributions in Newark.

> Beans (dried and canned), canned tuna fish, rice, pasta, flour, cornmeal, honey, dried fruits and nuts, broth, peanut butter, shelf stable milk and juice, rolled oats and other grains, bubbles, sidewalk chalk, jump ropes, soccer and basketballs (new please), toy cars, dolls and action figures, plus toys, spinners, fidgets, stress balls, squishies, stamps, sanitary napkins, individually packaged snacks (chips, granola bars, cookies, etc.).

Volunteering
If you have time on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evenings or Saturday or Sunday mornings and would like to help out, **please send an email to paxchristinj@gmail.com** to sign up for a time slot**.**

We will hold a training session for new volunteers at

- **10 am on Saturday**
- **11 am on Sunday**

Please check in at the white tent.

Bearing Witness
During non-visiting hours we also bear witness holding vigil on **Wednesday and Friday from 10 am - 12:00 pm.**

Thank you for all your generosity. You are helping the visitors and their loved ones inside feel cared for during this difficult time.

Peace & blessings,
Pax Christi, NJ

News Articles

While we may not all know people in detention, there are ways we can hear their stories. Here is a link to a New York Times Opinion/New York Times YouTube called: Inside ICE Detention: Stripped Shackled, Starved. Click on this link. There are interviews with people who legally were in the US. More than 70% of people in ICE detention do not have criminal convictions.

There is also a very informative report from the New York Times about 26 Federal Plaza in NYC called "Inside the Epicenter of ICE Detentions in NYC". Please click here.

An interview with Ms. Rachel about children in detention centers, particularly Dilley Immigration Processing Center in Texas, really brings it home. Please click here.

Episcopal Church's Response on the 25 June Supreme Court Opinions on Immigration
"The Episcopal Church will continue supporting immigrants and asylum seekers in all of our ministries. We will advocate for laws and policies that center welcome, protection from harm, and integration. The Episcopal Church is a home to immigrants, and Episcopalians across the country and around the world continue to minister to and walk alongside migrants in need. We will continue to uphold the dignity of refugees and migrants following the biblical call to welcome the stranger."
Link is here.

What Can I Do?

Join the **Episcopal Migration Response Network**. This network works to share best practices in direct service, organizing, advocacy, Christian formation, worship resources and community education in migration ministry. The subgroups are Migration with Dignity, the Rainbow Initiative, Rapid Response, Advocacy and the Prayer working group. When you register, just mention which subgroups you are interested in. *https://dfms.formstack.com/forms/emmministrynetwork*

To register for EMRN meetings (4th Wednesday of every month at 12 noon Eastern): Meeting Registration - Zoom .

There are also **EMRN Lunch & Learn** sessions on the second Wednesdays of each month, 12 noon Eastern. These are deeper dives into specific migration topics. August 12th will have panelists discussion how to engage congregations and on 9 September, the topic will be financial support. Meeting Registration - Zoom

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**.

The **Episcopal Migration Caucus** leads the movement for Migration with Dignity in the Episcopal Church. They advocate for bold witness and policies as well as supporting dioceses, parishes and individuals in response to the migration related crises globally. Please take a look at who they are, what resources they offer and how to put Migration with Dignity into practice. The link is here.

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

Your Province II EMM-Liaisons

Janet Day-Strehlow

Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe

José Delgado

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

Episcopal Migration Ministries: EMM
Office of Government Relations: OGR

- OGR Migration, Refugees & Immigration Web Page

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**.

Other Recurring calls

- **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, 10:30-11:15 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 to advocate for equality, human rights, security, and justice for Israelis, Palestinians, and all people of the Middle East. **Learn more and register.**

- Register to our monthly 'Vote Faithfully' networking calls 1:30–2 p.m. ET | June 4, July 2, Aug. 6, Sept. 3, Oct. 1, Nov. 5: https://zoom.us/meeting/register/Kivdobq5TymcwlSEO0cvpQ
- Election Engagement 'Vote Faithfully' Toolkit: Election Engagement – The Episcopal Church
- Register to the monthly Episcopal Church Creation Care Calls – 4th Wednesday of the Month 3-3:45 p.m. ET: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_NscYGg96RoiIGZUhz7H9Bg?mc_cid=7b12b65cf6&mc_eid=9b89f40816#/registration
- Register to the monthly 'In Dialogue' Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations monthly calls: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_hyLkpGK4QIel-JEWDVc4KA
- Register to the Quarterly Companions in Mission: Global Partnership calls - 1st Wednesday of every quarter 1-2 p.m. ET: https://zoom.us/meeting/register/e2rKUyaISEmMqDwr94iKKw
- Weekly prayers: https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/office-government-relations/public-policy-and-witness-weekly-prayers/
- Take action with our Action Alerts – The Episcopal Church