



# The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

From the Bishops' Office  
November 18, 2015

## Episcopal Presiding Bishop Michael Curry addresses Syrian refugee crisis: "Be not afraid!"

[November 18, 2015] [Episcopal Church](#) Presiding Bishop and Primate Michael B. Curry addresses the current Syrian refugee crisis:

### "Be not afraid!"

Often in the gospels, fear grips the people of God, and time and again, either the angels, or Our Lord himself, respond with the same words of comfort: "Be not afraid."

In times like this fear is real. And I share that fear with you. Our instinct tells us to be afraid. The fight-or-flight mentality takes hold. At the present moment, many across our Church and our world are grasped by fear in response to the terrorist attacks that unfolded in Paris last Friday. These fears are not unfounded. We can and should support law enforcement officials who are working hard and at great risk to protect us from crime and keep us safe. And yet, especially when we feel legitimate fear, our faith reminds us "Be not afraid." The larger truth is that our ultimate security comes from God in Christ.

In the Book of Leviticus, God says to the people of Israel that, "the foreigner who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the foreigner as yourself, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt." Accordingly, we welcome the stranger. We love our neighbor. The Episcopal Church has long been committed to resettling refugees in our own communities fleeing violence and persecution.

The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, through its Episcopal Migration Ministries service, works with dioceses and congregations, and the United States government, to settle refugees in communities across this great country. The Episcopal Church has been engaged in this ministry for more than 75 years. We will not let the nightmare this world often is keep us from carrying out the words of Jesus who told us to be a neighbor to those in need.

Refugees from places like Syria seek to escape the precise same ideological and religious extremism that gave birth to the attacks in Paris. They seek entry into our communities because their lives are imprisoned by daily fear for their existence. Just as Jesus bids us not to be afraid, we must, in turn, pass those words of comfort to those who turn to us for help.

But Jesus calls us to go even further: not just to love our neighbors and our kin, but to love our enemies. This is particularly difficult when we are afraid. But even in the midst of our fear we stand on the solid ground of our faith and proclaim the faith in Christ crucified and risen from the dead. In practical terms, this may mean finding strength in prayer, or in our neighbors, or in our churches, or in acts of solidarity with others who live in fear. This is the hope that casts out fear.

The fear is real. So we pray. We go to church. We remember who we are in Jesus. Our resurrection hope is larger than fear. Let nothing keep us from that hope, that faith, that security in God's dream for all of humanity.

"Be not afraid!"

**The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry**  
Presiding Bishop and Primate  
The Episcopal Church

### **Resources**

The following resources are offered for education and understanding of the Syrian refugee crisis.

- Episcopal Public Policy Network has posted an overview and a call to action [here](#)
- Two live webinars have been slated for November 19 and November 23. Information is [here](#).

### ***Thursday, November 19 and Monday, November 23***

To help understand the current situation with Syrian refugees, the [Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society](#) will present two live webinars, both 60 minutes long, on **Thursday, November 19** and **Monday, November 23** to examine this emerging refugee crisis.

Presented by the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society's [Episcopal Migration Ministries](#) and [Episcopal Public Policy Network](#), the live webinars will begin at 2 pm Eastern on November 19 and 8 pm Eastern on November 23.

### **Presenters**

Leading the webinar will be: Allison Duvall, Episcopal Migration Ministries Manager for Church Relations and Engagement; Lacy Broemel, Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society's Office of Government Relations Manager for Online Communications and Operations; and Deborah Stein, Director of Episcopal Migration Ministries for the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society.

### **Registration**

Registration is required.

Thursday, November 19, 2 pm - 3 pm Eastern webinar register [here](#).

Monday, November 23, 8 pm - 9 pm Eastern webinar register [here](#).

The webinar will be available on-demand following the event.

*On the web:*

[Episcopal Presiding Bishop Michael Curry addresses Syrian refugee crisis: "Be not afraid!"](#)