



## Jesus was a Refugee

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*Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." – Matthew 2:13*

In this season of Advent, we tell the story of the birth of Jesus and then of the visits from the Magi at Epiphany. Part of that story is the warning from an angel to Mary and Joseph telling them to flee their home and go to Egypt because King Herod was searching for Jesus to kill him. They became refugees.

We are in the midst of an unprecedented refugee resettlement project that we haven't seen since the end of the Vietnam War. There are more [displaced people](#) today than at any time since the end of World War II, among them our many Afghan neighbors seeking refuge in the United States. Most of those who are forcibly displaced are in countries that neighbor their home countries, which are mostly developing countries.

Under the Trump Administration, the US refugee resettlement program was effectively dismantled in just a few short years. Building that program back up will take time, money, and energy. But our Afghan neighbors need help now. Many are still waiting for processing at American military bases in the US or overseas. Our asylum system has long been backlogged and asylum seekers aren't even allowed to wait in safety for their claims to be processed.

This week on December 18 is International Migrants Day. We can all live our call to welcome the stranger and love our neighbor by supporting those fleeing their homes, like Mary, Joseph, and Jesus.

You can work with other churches or faith groups in your community to support the refugees and migrants in your community [in a variety of ways](#).

- Resettlement offices are overwhelmed, so determining what you can

provide before you reach out is helpful. [Learn more about the resettlement process and ways you can help.](#)

- If you want to help Afghans in particular, [Church World Service has some opportunities.](#)
- If you have or know of safe, welcoming housing in your community, let your local refugee resettlement office know ([list of resettlement offices](#)).
- [Support global partners](#) working with refugees and internally displaced people.
- Use your voice on behalf of refugees and migrants by advocating for a better immigration system.
  - o Tell [your members of Congress](#) to support the Afghan Adjustment Act, a bill that would allow Afghans who arrive with humanitarian parole, a temporary status, to have an opportunity to apply to become lawful permanent residents – the same legal status they would have received had they been admitted as refugees.
  - o [Tell President Biden](#) to end Title 42 and the Migrant Protection Protocols (“Remain in Mexico”) that force asylum seekers to wait in unsafe border camps while their claims are processed.

We can all take one action this week to support our new neighbors and work towards a just world for all.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rebekah Choate is the Associate for Global Advocacy and Education, Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ.

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