



THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

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*When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. **Leviticus 19:33-34***

You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.
Deuteronomy 10:19

Dear People of Faith,

Holy Scripture is filled with Godly wisdom about how we should care for each other, especially those who are strangers, aliens or refugees. The call to love and care for others—regardless of their place of birth, color of their skin or socio-economic situation—resonates strongly throughout the Bible. For that reason, World Refugee Day, June 20, has become an important event for many in our community. It is a time to remember the call to look after and care for each other, especially refugees—those who have been forced to leave their native land to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster—who are now living in our community.

As with many things during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are having to learn new ways to celebrate events and occasions together. So it is with World Refugee Day, which, in the past, has been a large and joyous gathering in person where we honor and celebrate our Chattanooga refugees—their courage and unique gifts—as well as the amazing and faithful work of Bridge Refugee Services in helping them to make Chattanooga their home.

This year, we are all celebrating at home with these wonderful and thoughtfully prepared kits with fun educational activities. As you enjoy these activities on World Refugee Day, think about the fact that we are, in a sense, still together in celebrating our Chattanooga refugees because so many of us throughout the Chattanooga area will be enjoying our kits at the same time.

Each year when I have been at the World Refugee Day Celebration, I am reminded of the special gifts each culture, region and nation have to offer. I am also humbled by the kindness and graciousness of Chattanooga's refugees. I hope these kits and activities will give you some sense of these qualities. Above all, I hope they will be a vivid reminder to each of us that we are all beloved children of God.

Enjoy! And let us all remember that at one time, we were all strangers, aliens or refugees, so may we love each other.

Blessings, grace and peace,

Robert T. J. Childers