Floor Resolution: Response to Global Refugee Crisis

Names of the Submitters:

The Rev. Kathie Adams-Shepherd   The Rev. Tracy Johnson Russell
The Rev. Whitney Altopp           The Rev. Lois Keen
The Rev. Jim Bradley              The Rev. Rowena Kemp
The Rev. Dana Campbell            The Rev. Thomas Mariconda, Deacon
The Rev. Paul J. Carling, Ph.D.   The Rev. David McIntosh
The Rev. Alex Dyer                The Rev. Mary Anne Osborn
The Rev. Tom Furrer               The Rev. Kyle Pedersen, Deacon
The Rev. Jack Gilpin              The Rev. Marston Price
The Rev. Don Hamer                The Rt. Rev. Andrew D Smith
The Rev. Kate Heichler            The Rev. Adam Thomas
The Rev. Kurt Huber               The Rev. Rachel Thomas
The Rev. Stephanie Johnson        The Rev. Ellen Tillotson

Resolved, that the 231st Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut urges its 168 congregations to work together to co-sponsor a minimum of 30 refugee families in 2016.

Explanation:
Due to the conflict in Syria, we are currently experiencing the greatest refugee crisis since World War II. Episcopal Migration Ministries says that the Syrian refugee crisis is the largest forced displacement of people in the world today with 9.5 million people displaced, including 3.2 million refugees who have fled to neighboring countries.

The recent US Department of State announcement to increase the total number of annual refugee arrivals by a total of 15,000 (70,000 to 85,000) will be felt by IRIS in the coming months, and now is the time to strengthen our partnership. IRIS was founded by the Episcopal Church in Connecticut and we have a long history of supporting IRIS financially, and now is time for us to act as diocese. Many Episcopal congregations have partnered with IRIS in the past, and now is time for other parishes to rise to the challenge that is currently before us.
Statement
By committing congregations in the Episcopal Church in Connecticut to co-sponsoring at least 30 families, the Episcopal Church in Connecticut will work to live into the baptismal promise to “strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.” The mission of God calls us to respond to people in need and to welcome the stranger. By co-sponsoring refugees, congregations will deepen their own sense of God’s mission and gain a more profound understanding of our global mission. It is also a hope that congregations will partner together to strengthen their understanding of our common life and interdependence.

Statement of Requirements to Implement the Resolution
This will require no additional funding from our diocesan budget. Regions will need to work together to find nearby partner congregations as well as use congregational resources. Episcopal churches could also partner with other denominations. Congregations who were contributing 12.5% to our common life to the Budget of Convention to support our common work and participation in God’s mission and are now contributing 10% could use these resources to co-sponsor a refugee family. Congregations would need to work with IRIS to match families with refugee families. The Episcopal Church in Connecticut and IRIS would then work together to assure we meet our stated goal of 30 refugee families. A network of congregations sponsoring refugees could be formed to discuss any other logistics and best practices.