



The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada

United Church of Canada

Moderator's Message: Syrian Refugee Crisis

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

I bring you greetings in the name of Jesus, Comfort and Guide—and also once a refugee.

We are called at this particular moment in time to witness in a concrete way to our Christian faith in response to the needs of millions of desperate people seeking refuge and compassion. The plight of Syrian refugee children washing up on Mediterranean shores has struck at the core of Canadian self-perception as generous and welcoming people. As we have done in the past, we are responding once again with an outpouring of concern and compassion.

For decades, churches have been sounding the alarm about a deepening global crisis for forcibly uprooted people. We know that these are not the first tragic deaths among refugees fleeing danger, nor will they be the last. We must act immediately to turn the tide on this horrific reality. Right now, thousands of people from all over the world are risking their lives every day in search of safety. Some have been offered sanctuary; millions more have died en route at the hands of human traffickers or are held in detention camps, where they are treated primarily as dangerous security threats, or are ignored as if they do not exist.

Since the crisis in Syria began, the United Church has been actively contributing to humanitarian relief and sponsoring refugees. We are once again amplifying our appeal because the church wants to do all that it possibly can to help those in need of assistance and seeking refuge.

With a renewed sense of purpose, The United Church of Canada joins others in stating that we must respond urgently, compassionately, and comprehensively. United Church congregations have a long history of supporting refugees. Many of our communities of faith are already in the process of sponsoring refugee families to come to Canada. However, the need is great and it demands an even greater response from all of us.

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As Moderator, I urge communities of faith to donate to the church's updated and ongoing [Syria Appeal](#) to provide urgently needed food, shelter, medical care, clothing, and other necessities for millions of displaced Syrians within their country and in neighbouring Jordan and Lebanon.

support United Church faith communities undertaking sponsorship of Syrian refugees through the United Church's Refugee Program. For information about which faith communities are sponsoring Syrian refugees in your area and how you can help, write to [Refugees](#).

- urge the Canadian government and federal election candidates in your riding to 1) announce a program to immediately resettle significantly more than the proposed 10,000 Syrians, 2) provide support for generous levels of private sponsorship of Syrian refugees, and 3) lift obstacles to speedy family reunification and allow Syrian refugee cases to be processed in Canada.

Together, we have the capacity to make a profound difference in the lives of thousands of refugees. The time to act is now. Please consider how you and your faith community can best support the ongoing efforts to address this desperate refugee crisis, and please continue to hold the people of Syria and the surrounding region in your prayers.

In faith and hope,

The Right Rev. Jordan Cantwell
Moderator
The United Church of Canada

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