

Refugee Sponsorship Update

Delivered to the St. Andrew's Guelph congregation

by Paul Harrison and Rick McDonald on Sunday, May 22, 2016

Paul: Just another very brief update on the Syrian refugee situation. I need this to be brief because my friend John Holman has the clock on me!

There is really nothing new to report. Rob Shropshire receives his bi-weekly list of BVOR candidates from Immigration Canada and he scours the lists for possible matches and when he thinks he has found one he immediately puts a hold on it and contacts the Sponsoring group. The lists will keep coming until the end of June, followed by a summer pause, then restart in September.

When Joanne and I last spoke with him he said he was going to request more Syrian refugee families be placed on the BVOR lists and to support that and our own initiative here we wrote to Lloyd Longfield, again, and urged him to push the government to use its immigration personnel in the Middle East to do just that—to get more Syrian families on the BVOR listings.

Jaya James of the Guelph Refugee Forum told us when we visited her at First Baptist that about 76 Syrian families are expected to settle in Guelph and that by the end of June only 9 families will have arrived.

Everything is at a snail's pace. Our family will come eventually and we hope all our volunteers will be ready to pitch in when that happens.

In our wonderful Pentecost service last Sunday we sang Hymn 382 and Joanne wrote down a key line. It reads "TEACH ME THE PATIENCE OF UNANSWERED PRAYER ". So, until Joanne and I get that long awaited phone call from Toronto we can all phone or email Lloyd Longfield's office about BVOR refugees, keep praying and practise patience.

THANK YOU

Rick: With the delays outlined by Paul, we haven't said much lately about fundraising. However, in the past 2 weeks, initiatives started some months ago came to fruition and we need to inform you accordingly.

Presbytery: Following up on a recommendation made by Rev. John Borthwick last fall, the Presbytery had decided to make \$10,000.00 available per quadrant to congregations that committed to Syrian refugee sponsorship. St. Andrew's applied for funding in February and as it turned out, only 2 congregations in our quadrant (St. Andrew's and Kortright) had moved forward with a refugee sponsorship initiative. We learned last week that each of the two congregations will receive \$5,000.00.

Concert in Support of Refugees: some of you attended the concert on April 23, 2016 that was produced by the Royal City Ambassadors in partnership with Holy Rosary and St. Andrew's. Proceeds were split 3 ways and the Ambassadors delivered a cheque to St. Andrew's last week for \$1,850.00.

These two contributions bring our total to over \$57,000.00! Let's keep praying for the refugees.