



PROPHETIC VOICE

Ethelyn with Myanmar refugee, Emmanuel Khin Thein.

“There were needs: foster children didn’t have a good foster home, the elderly weren’t being well cared for, refugees needed to be settled. Every step of the way it was the church.”

President of Lutheran Services Carolinas (LSC), Ted Goins, goes on to explain, “It was the church that said we need to address these issues. The synod needed a way to express that prophetic voice in N.C. and so created LSC to be the instrument that did that. We’re doing this together.”

Christ the King, Cary, member Ethelyn Hegele agrees. She and her congregation have been helping LSC with refugee resettlement in the Raleigh area for 30 years. “It might have felt like a bold step in the beginning but not anymore; it just feels normal. I really take Matthew 25 to heart! If you’re serving others, you’re serving Jesus.” Jesus’ parable in Matthew 25 reminds each of us that we do for the least of these, we do for Jesus.

Ethelyn first got involved as a tutor, working with a Cambodian family—mother, father, and son. She tutored the mother, her husband tutored the father, and the Hegeles’ elementary school-aged son, Chris, used a notebook and a Sears catalog to cut out pictures and write words so the son could learn English, too. She was hooked! “After you work with the refugees and get to know them, they’re not strangers, they’re friends!”

For many years Christ the King helped resettle a new family every three years. The congregation would help them furnish an apartment, learn English, get acclimated to the community, learn bus routes, and get their kids enrolled in school. Sometimes the refugees are Christian, and sometimes they’re not, but either way they will come one Sunday to the church after getting settled to meet the people that assisted them. Then that family becomes a resource for the next family which is helped by LSC.

Ethelyn shares a story from a time when she was particularly tired. She recalls, "We were helping a family move in their apartment which was on the second floor. But even to get to the first floor, there were a lot of steps! Going up and down, up and down, all day long, I had to keep repeating to myself, 'Matthew 25, darn it!'"

We are called to serve, to welcome the stranger, to care for the least of these. LSC, through their refugee resettlement program, partners with the NC Synod do together what we couldn't do separately.



Beth Gonzalez (right) of Christ the King, Cary, with Guinean refugee, Zineb Konate.

Thanks be to God for the ways God uses us to proclaim the Gospel in the world!

VISION STATEMENT

God calls the North Carolina Synod of the ELCA to...

*Cultivate & Celebrate
Vital Congregations*

*Identify, Equip and Nurture
Whole & Healthy Leaders*

*Embrace & Engage
in Collaboration*

*Proclaim the Promise of the
Resurrection with a Prophetic Voice*

...all for the sake of the world.

Bishop Tim, the synod staff, and Synod Council thank you for all the work you do for the sake of the Gospel – in your congregation and community, as well as in partnership with other congregations in the synod and across this church!



North Carolina Synod
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