



Dear St. John's Family,

August 18, 2021

As members of the body of Christ, it is impossible not to recognize the brokenness and despair of the world around us. Anyone who has turned on the television or radio, opened a newspaper, or had a conversation with a loved one is confronted with the reality that darkness is casting a shadow over so many. The devastating news of another earthquake in Haiti has left over 1,900 of our brothers and sisters dead and over 10,000 still missing. The horrific events unfolding in Afghanistan and the desperate cries of our afghani neighbors is deafening. On top of it all lies the heavy blanket of a global pandemic that isn't finished with us yet. Our hospitals and health professionals are being stretched beyond their breaking points. Our schools' administrators are facing impossible decisions about the wellbeing of their students and staff members. Teachers and students, parents and grandparents, and entire communities are desperate to care and protect those they love. Shadows are everywhere it seems.

As a community of faith, we have a responsibility to care for one another, to acknowledge the brokenness we see, and to fight for the vulnerable. Information is power. Awareness produces compassion and compassion leads to action. We have before us an opportunity to truly see our neighbors by paying attention to what they are facing. I ask you to please stay informed. The more we know, the stronger our prayers become. I want to share with you two incredible resources that not only provide information about what our neighbors are facing, but also ministries we can support and help mobilize.

Episcopal Migration Ministries is a ministry of The Episcopal Church and is one of nine national agencies responsible for resettling refugees in the United States in partnership with the government. EMM are already working to resettle Afghan families and provide the necessary resources they need. Please subscribe to their page to stay up to date on what's happening and how you can help: <https://episcopalmigrationministries.org/>

The other resource I recommend is Episcopal Relief and Development: <https://www.episcopalrelief.org/> ERD is mobilizing to meet the immediate and long-term needs of our Haitian brothers and sisters following the 7.2 earthquake and now tropical storm, Grace. As the largest diocese in the Episcopal Church, our neighbors need our support. Please consider how you can help.

Most importantly, pray. Pray for those who are grieving, pray for the first responders and helpers, pray for the community leaders, and the families they represent. After you pray, I encourage you to consider how you might cast out some of this darkness by sharing the light that resides within you.

I remain faithfully yours,

Amanda+

Rector, St. John's Episcopal Church

GROW IN GOD, ACT IN SERVICE, WITNESS IN LOVE

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