

June 20, 2018 – World Refugee Day

### **A letter to the church on World Refugee Day 2018**

Dear friends,

Today I am in Waterloo, Ont. taking part in Canadian Lutheran World Relief's (CLWR) World Refugee Day Prayer Breakfast.

I am proud of the work being done in this area by our church and by CLWR. During the Reformation Challenge, we sponsored more than 500 refugees, offering generous support and friendship as these people settled in Canada.

And yet, I am aware of our society's sometimes weak commitment to being a welcoming and safe community. Particularly distressing are stories emerging from the United States of intentional policy choices to separate families and criminally prosecuting people as they cross the border seeking asylum.

I urge you to read and share the letter I have written to Canada's Prime Minister ([elcic.ca/documents/201806worldrefugeeday.pdf](http://elcic.ca/documents/201806worldrefugeeday.pdf)) imploring him to uphold the rights of refugees in Canada, in North America and around the world. In the letter, I call on the Prime Minister to use whatever influence he has to ask the U.S. Government to reverse these policies that deliberately violate human rights.

I also urge you to pray for our sister church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and give thanks for their continued witness and support of refugees ([elca.org/News-and-Events/7935](http://elca.org/News-and-Events/7935)).

On this World Refugee Day, I invite you to renew your commitment to upholding the rights of refugees, to learn and raise awareness about refugee issues, and to pray for peace, justice and safety for all people.

Each new dawn is a reminder that light arises from the darkness, providing an opportunity to follow Christ on the journey of living by grace. I am reminded of the parable of the great banquet, *Then the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled* (Luke 14:15–24). Our calling is not to separate families; our calling is to invite everyone to the feast, so that all may be fed, all may be welcome, the house may be filled, and God's community may be complete.

Yours in Christ,



The Rev. Susan C. Johnson  
National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada