

St. James Anglican Cathedral

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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St. James Anglican Cathedral welcomes community assistance with Syrian refugees

PEACE RIVER---Twenty-one Peace River citizens gathered at St. James Anglican Cathedral last night to discuss the impending arrival of a Syrian refugee family.

Discussions centred on housing, household set-up, wallets (ID, health card, drivers license, library card, etc), ESL training, job readiness, school enrolments, mental and physical wellbeing as well as fundraising and cultural awareness.

Participants worked in groups to brainstorm about each topic offering suggestions from their own experience. Notes from the sessions will be shared in the new Facebook group created for this project "Peace River #WelcomeRefugees". When details of the specific family's size and composition are available, the information will be posted so winter clothing and household needs can be requested and gathered.

St. James' vestry council passed a motion on Sunday, November 29th to proceed with the support and sponsorship of one Syrian family and to set up a separate fund welcoming community donations to that purpose. "The community's involvement is key to the successful integration of new families," said Reverend Dr. Iain Luke while thanking meeting participants for their interest.

On Monday, November 30th, St. James' refugee settlement coordinator Deb Prothero met with local agencies at Peace River Town Hall to discuss potential service needs and any apparent gaps. The Province of Alberta has set aside \$1 million to assist municipalities, agencies and community groups to meet specific gaps in service. An application will be prepared to meet the grant deadline of December 7th. Representing a wide swath of service delivery in Peace River the agencies present were called together quickly by Tanya Bell, Peace River's Director of Community Services, to meet the grant application deadline. Agencies are now preparing to meet any potential needs of this refugee family.

Other Northwestern Alberta communities considering Syrian refugee sponsorship include Grande Prairie, Fairview and Boyle.

St. James Anglican Cathedral is located at 9709 98th Avenue in Peace River. Our mission is to welcome, accept and encourage ALL people in the name of Christ. Our vision is to be a Christ centered community reaching out in service and love.

Church services: Tues.-Fri., 9:00 a.m.—Morning Prayer, Synod Office , all welcome;
Tuesdays, 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion at Sutherland Place;
Wednesday 7:00 p.m. St James Cathedral Chapel;
Sunday 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. St James Cathedral

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More information: St. James Dean and Rector, Rev. Dr. Iain Luke 780-624-2743
St. James Refugee Settlement Coordinator, Deb Prothero 780-219-1215