

Our Asylum Seeker Sponsorship Project - In Action (timeline)

- * Council approved in November 2020 exploring this Asylum Seeker Sponsorship Project
- * December 18: Virtual Meeting: with teams from Messiah, First Congregational & Christ the King
- * February 3: Virtual Meeting: this multi-team meeting included a PowerPoint about the sponsorship & a discussion with two asylum seekers about their experiences as newcomers
- * On request, Pastor Karl developed & disseminated a video which included the above PowerPoint and segments of the asylum seekers' sharing.
- * Congregational members from the 3 churches participated in a racial justice 4-part video series, developed by Dr. Jessie Heines, Professor Emeritus, UMASS Lowell. He also moderated a discussion in March with us.
- * A Thrivent zoom event helped Thrivent members of the Lutheran churches learn how Thrivent Action Grants can help our potential sponsorship.
- * A Church World Service video about sponsorship of families throughout the US was offered to congregations and members.
- * Most of the Messiah Team members were on a webinar with Pastor Allyson Pryor whose work relates to border ministries and matching congregations with asylum seekers in need of sponsors.
- * Messiah distributed an Accompaniment Page where members could volunteer for specific things to help and/or accompany the asylum seeker family. All 13 of the designated areas are covered by the 20 Messiah individuals, who also wrote additional creative ways in which they offered to help. This represents 3-4 times more than the minimum recommended necessary number of individuals.
- * In an "Intent to Support" paper, 17 giving units of Messiah members & friends indicated they would give about \$20,000 to the Asylum Project. This represents about 66% more than the minimum the team felt necessary to advance the project.
- * At Messiah House, Richard Ball had the septic system inspected (Richard & Marjorie paid the \$250 bill) and then had it emptied & repaired (church maintenance paid the \$550 bill).
- * For Messiah House, Richard received an estimate for putting in a shower and outlet for a washer & dryer (\$5235).
- * June 26: 5 members of the Asylum Seeker Team went through Messiah House to assess the items and then contacted individuals in charge of item areas.
- * August 10: At August Council meeting, Pastor Karl gained approval for items to be offered to worshippers after the summer services & for chairing a committee to clear out Messiah House.
- * September 7: Asylum Seeker Sponsorship Meeting with representatives from Messiah, First Congregational, Milford & Nashua Home Host Network/Nashua UU. Pastor Karl proposed we use Messiah House, which was approved by everyone. First Congregational is having a congregation meeting on September 12 where the pastor will invite members to participate in the sponsorship. Representatives from Nashua UU are going to propose that a month's emphasis of their Outreach Fund, where individuals contribute, be focused on this sponsorship.
- * September 14: At September Council meeting the council voted to support the Asylum Family Sponsorship Program as well as using the Messiah House to house the family. They voted to convene a special congregational meeting (per our Messiah Constitution C10.02.) on October 3rd to have this project brought before the congregation for discussion and an approval vote.