



Volume 1 No. 6

July–August 2016

## Newsletter

Of the Eastern Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

### Refugee Support Team Supports Afghani Family

Since late May, our parish's Refugee Support Team (RST) has been working to help a family of eight from Afghanistan get settled in their new life in the United States. The Popal family--husband Hadi, wife Pashtana, and six children--are among an estimated 1,300 refugees who will arrive in Portland this year under the direction of the federal government and local resettlement agencies.

Refugees are coming from countries like Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan, and Syria because they are in danger of persecution due to race, religion, or political affiliation. Refugees are not automatically American citizens, but they are expected to learn English and find

employment, becoming self-sufficient after eight months and applying for status as Permanent Resident Aliens after the first year. They can apply for citizenship after having been a U.S. resident for five years.

The team consists of Brigid Gerard, Mat. Connie Shank, Victor and Heidi Bondarenko, Maria Nash, and Dn. John Jensen. Also, Joanna Tobey has done a lot with purchasing thrift store items for the Popals and helps with the tutoring of the children. In addition to the core team, many church members have generously donated money, items, and their time.

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### Holy Land Pilgrimage

On May 17, 2016, six of our parishioners--Rdr. Gerald Daily, Rdr.



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Jon Peugh and Anne Peugh, Ruth Burkett, Raeanne Lewman, and Roxy Rupp--flew out of Portland toward the Holy Land, where they arrived on May 18 in time to check into their hotel north of Israel and have dinner.

The next day their tour began with a visit to Mary's well. This is where the Angel Gabriel told Mary she would give birth to Jesus. Anne was able to obtain some water from the well to take home to share with others. Next the group visited the Church of the Annunciation, then continued to Cana and the Church of the Wedding. After that was a visit to Capernaum, a boat ride across the Sea of Galilee, and dinner on Lake Tiberius. The pilgrims were in awe of all that they saw on the first day. Roxy mentioned that walking the streets of Capernaum where Jesus lived was an incredible experience.

On Friday, May 20, the group began their day with a visit to Mt. Tabor and the Church of

Transfiguration. They visited Nablus (known as "Shechem" in the Bible). Abraham traveled through Shechem on his way to Canaan and offered his first sacrifice to God there. The pilgrims next visited Samaria and Jacob's Well on their way to their hotel in Bethlehem.

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***Refugee Support Team...continued...***

The family currently lives in a modest apartment off E. Burnside and 142nd near Gresham: Hadi (age 36), Pashtana (35), Hajira (15), Sultana (14), Lima (12), Azam (10), Sana (7), and Hadia (5). Hadi, whose English language skills are quite good, worked for the U.S. Army Special Forces in Afghanistan, and he was a math teacher before that.



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As an interpreter for the U.S. military, Hadi was threatened by the Taliban and he and his family were forced to go into hiding and to relocate many times over the course of the past seven years while waiting for a visa. The couple had hoped that by helping the Americans they were making a brighter future for their country and for their children. But it soon became clear that this hope would mean leaving their extended family and the country they loved to relocate to a foreign land.

The four older children learned some English in their schooling in Afghanistan; the

mother, Pashtana, is taking English classes for the first time five days a week at IRCO. According to Maria Nash, the team leader, on a recent visit with the Popal family Pashtana rushed over and kissed her on both cheeks and, as translated by her husband, she said, “I have lived for 35 years, but my life has just started.” This was a testament to the great meaning this time holds for her and her family. “It is a huge honor to be a part of their lives, if even in small ways,” Maria said. “I’m imagining a time in the not-too-distant future when we’ll be able to have conversations with all the members of the family.”

**From Heidi Bondarenko:**

We’ve so enjoyed getting to know this sweet family. The younger children speak no English, but that didn’t stop us from hours of puzzle making, ice cream consuming, and singing a very out-of-tune Happy Birthday at the top of our lungs (somehow they knew this song in



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English!) The entire family is very hospitable, and we can never leave their home without consuming large quantities of juice, tea and ramen while sitting on the floor, Afghani style. The longer we interact with them, the more we realize how incredibly daunting is the task of starting a new life in a completely foreign culture. We are so glad our church can help them in this massive undertaking, and hopefully share Christ's love as we do!

**From Brigid Gerard:**

When I first heard about a program for sponsoring a refugee family I was excited to step forward for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the sense of frustration with regard to the plight of so many refugee families around the world and my seeming inability to impact so vast a problem as theirs. The sheer numbers are so astounding; not since World War II, we are told, have there been so many displaced people around the world. Here was

an opportunity to make a difference for one family making a frightening and difficult transition into a new life free from the trauma of military conflict, but in a land so foreign it is hard to even imagine their struggle.

I don't think I have ever met a more beautiful family. They are kind to one another and so gracious. One can see the heartbreak and struggle on the faces of the parents, but also such courage! The children seem undaunted and poised for great success in their new lives. Tutoring English reading, writing and spelling basics to non-English speaking students is a challenge that, as a teacher, I have never faced before. It proves to be gratifying and, at the same time, absolutely hilarious! We laugh a lot as we stumble through my sign language antics and their puzzled expressions. They love to laugh!

We shopped for bed linens, arranged for a kitchen to be set up and stocked, put bunk-beds



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together, hung shower curtains, etc. This lovely family will need much support in the coming months and years. Hadi has not yet found employment and the transition to school in the fall may be tough. But we are so grateful for the privilege of being a part of their support system and ask your continued holy prayers on their behalf.

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### **Holy Land Pilgrimage...continued...**

Day 5 began with a visit to the top of the Mount of Olives, then a walk down the Palm Sunday road, stopping at the Russian Orthodox Church of Mary Magdalene. They also visited the Tomb of the Holy Mother and the garden of Jesus' agony and continued to the Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu in Mt. Zion and the Monastery of St. Theodosius.

The group began Day 6 with a visit to St. Saba's Monastery, founded in the 5th century, and continued to the Shepherd's Field and Grotto. Then they visited the Church of the Nativity. All of Day 7 consisted of a day trip to Haifa where the pilgrims visited archeological sites and churches along the Mediterranean Sea.

On Tuesday, May 24, the group entered the old city of Jerusalem via the Zion Gate to see the Temple Mount, the Pool of Bethesda, St. Anne's Church, and the Chapel of Flagellation. They continued on to visit the Ecce Homo Arch and then walked the Via Dolorosa to reach the prison of Jesus, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and St. James Cathedral.

The last day for sightseeing, Day 9, started with a drive to Jericho, then a visit to the Mount of Temptation. The group then visited the Jordan River and, after lunch, proceeded to the Dead Sea. They continued to the Monastery of St.



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George and then returned to their hotel to prepare for their flight back to the U.S. the next day.

Our six COA pilgrims were able to have some very meaningful off-the-agenda experiences during the tour while the rest of the tour group was sleeping soundly. Their tour guide, Michael Alyas, accompanied them to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher at midnight when there were no crowds or tourists as there had been during the day.

Ruth was able to help the group enter the St. Elizabeth Church by saying “Christ is Risen” in Russian to the young nun who came to the monastery gate. Roxy was especially touched by the simplicity and beauty of this church and the presence that she felt there.

Raeanne called the pilgrimage “the trip of a lifetime.” She said, “Touching things I knew Christ had actually touched and walking the same streets that Christ walked when he was on earth were just some of the experiences that have

left an impression on me. It was like I had come home.”

## Visiting Bishops

Our parish was blessed by the visits of two bishops recently. Our Bishop Benjamin was here May 21–23 and served Divine Liturgy on Sunday. After services, a lunch was served in the parish hall. The wedding of Curt Sommer and Kara Stout was scheduled for later that afternoon in the church, and the couple was surprised and pleased to hear that Bishop Benjamin would perform the matrimonial service for them.

Bishop David from Alaska visited our community the weekend of June 18–20 and served Divine Liturgy on Sunday. After Liturgy, a delicious Russian meal was served, which had been prepared by our Russian



parishioners and many other helpers.

Jensen

## Sacraments and Blessings

We view our church newsletter as a record of the activities of our church and our parishioners. Each issue we will provide information on all baptisms, marriages, marriage blessings, funerals, chrismations, and the newly catechized. If you participated in any sacraments since January 1, 2015 and do not see your information below, please call our church office manager/ bookkeeper, Connie Lemen, for the sacramental paperwork to fill out. If you become a catechumen, you can e-mail your name, saint’s name, and date of being catechized to the newsletter staff at islandtimezone@yahoo.com. Thank you!

### Marriage

5/23/16: Curt Sommer and Kara Stout

### Baptism

6/12/16: Lydia Sherwood (infant)  
Godparents: Deacon John and Lori

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## Upcoming Events – July and August

- Dormition Fast from Aug. 1 to Aug. 15
- Feast of the Transfiguration: Vigil 8/5, 6:30 p.m.; Liturgy 8/6, 9:00 a.m.
- St. Herman of Alaska, 8/9: Matins 8:00 a.m., Liturgy 9:00 a.m.
- Dormition of the Most-Holy Theotokos: Vigil 8/14, 6:30 p.m.; Liturgy 8/15, 9:00 a.m.

(No major events in the month of July.)

## Recipe



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### Easy Mexican Casserole (slow cooker)

In every issue we include an easy recipe that can be used for Fast Days or Fish and Oil days on the fasting calendar.

#### Ingredients:

- 1 can green beans (drained and rinsed) or 1–½ cups fresh green beans, cut in thirds
- 1 can black beans (drained and rinsed)
- 1 can (14–½ oz.) diced tomatoes, drained
- Two 4-oz. cans diced green chilies
- 4-oz. can diced black olives
- 5 diced green onions
- 2 cups salsa
- 3 corn tortillas, cut into bite size pieces

#### Directions:

Stir together all ingredients, then pour into slow cooker and cook on low for about 5 hours or until

done. (Before eating, you can shake yeast flakes on serving as a substitute for shredded cheese. The flavor is somewhat similar.)

If you have submissions for the newsletter, please email them to

Gail Cramer at [islandtimezone@yahoo.com](mailto:islandtimezone@yahoo.com)

### Hospitality Schedule

10-Jul	Dorning/Seylon
Belai	
17-Jul	Larkins
24-Jul	Green, Mark & Leann
31-Jul	Sarah & Roberto
Silva	



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7–Aug                    Tadesse,  
Martinsen, Senge  
14–Aug    Broding  
/Selander/Johnson  
21–Aug    Seraphina Green & Judy  
Sherley  
28–Aug    Stockett/Derugin  
4–Sep      Shaw, Nash, McFadden  
11–Sep                  Jensen /  
McMichael  
18–Sep                  Alex & Diana  
Shechenko  
25–Sep                  Michael & Xenia  
McConnell  
2–Oct      Walker / Boyd  
9–Oct      Vallejos