

The Most Rev. Sean W. Rowe
Presiding Bishop
The Episcopal Church
815 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10017

May 15, 2025

Dear Most Rev. Rowe:

We at St. Brendan's Episcopal Church in Franklin Park, Pa., strongly endorse your letter this week on the need to conclude the church's refugee resettlement grant agreements with the U.S. federal government. Although this must have been very difficult for you and other church leaders, we support your decision and your rationale.

When Jesus called on all of us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and welcome the stranger, He did not want us to pick winners and losers — those who deserved our care versus those who could be shunned. Yet that is exactly what the government has done, first, by closing in January the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, in which the church has been an active and non-discriminating participant, and then by calling on Episcopal Migration Ministries two weeks ago to resettle white Afrikaners from South African who have been classified as refugees.

Many of God's people around the world — those who are vulnerable and persecuted for their faith, culture, gender or race — need an open door to America, where opportunities like housing, education, employment and basic, personal safety can offer families a new life. The federal government, however, wants to replace welcoming with hand-picking who may come in — and that process is an affront to our Christian beliefs.

At St. Brendan's we have offered English as a Second Language classes to immigrants from various nations for years. Our parishioners have provided cash, clothing and furniture to help settle a stream of newcomers from war-torn Haiti. Our CRIES Advocacy program, which tithes 10 percent of church income for use outside the parish, routinely supports nonprofits that address human needs across the globe.

God does not play favorites, nor should we. That's why we are heartened that the Episcopal Church, despite the end of its involvement in federally funded refugee resettlement, will remain a beacon of hope and a source of aid to migrants through other means. We as a parish will support the church's new efforts and we urge the leaders in our Diocese of Pittsburgh to join us in that.

These are tumultuous times and St. Brendan's will pray for guidance to meet the challenge. With commitment and action, we will continue to welcome our migrant brothers and sisters, and we will encourage all Americans to do the same.

Yours in faith,

The Rev. Canon Nancy Suellau
Interim Priest-in-Charge

Tom Waseleski
Senior Warden

cc: The Right Rev. Ketlen A. Solak, Bishop of the Diocese of Pittsburgh