**St. Paul’s Church Refugee Committee**

**Meeting: November 1, 2015**

**Present:** Kathy Black, Derek Hounsell (Chair), Kirsten Jones, Bill Lord, Isobel Macpherson, Kate Newton, John Osler, Nathan Otley, Tony Otley, Mike Vavra

1. **Welcome:** Derek thanked everyone for coming and said how gratified he was to see so many present.
2. **Update:**
3. **Finances:** Derek began by giving an update on the finances. As of Monday, October 26, just over $22,000 has been received in pledges and actual donations. This means we are well on the way to our target of $30,000.
4. **Application:** In order for an application to be considered by a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH), in our case, the Diocese, 50% of the total amount, i.e., $15,000, is required to be in hand. As we now have this amount, Derek called Marie Kettle, the Diocesan Refugee Sponsorship Coordinator, only to find that she is out of the province, returning on Nov 10. However, she now knows that we are “ready to go”.
5. **Structure:**

Derek said that, while he prefers a rather informal ‘modus operandi’, the SAH requires us to set up a relatively formal structure, with a designated chairperson, secretary, treasurer, together with members assigned specific tasks (See p. 13 of the ISANS Refugee Information Sponsorship package:

[www.isans.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/InformationPackage\_2015.pdf](http://www.isans.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/InformationPackage_2015.pdf)). He said that Paul Friesen, as Rector, has agreed to be Honorary Chair, that Bill has agreed to be Secretary, and, for the time being, that he will act as both Co-ordinator and Treasurer. He asked John if he would act as Asst. Co-ordinator, to which John assented.

In response to a question from John, Derek stated that a ‘flow through’ account will be set up within St. Paul’s, which will allow charitable tax receipts to be issued.

With respect to accommodation, Isobel has been in contact with two parishioners who may be of some assistance. She will speak to them again. There was some discussion about locations in Halifax which are favoured by immigrants. Bill said there are many immigrants in Fairview and there is also a Coptic Orthodox church, St. Mina’s, with which Syrian Christians could identify.

With respect to medical issues, Cathy, Isobel, Kate and Tony all have professional backgrounds which will be of great assistance.

Derek asked Mike if he would devise some publicity which could be posted at the rear of the church. Mike agreed to take this on.

Bill said that he thought it important to let representatives of the three levels of government know that St. Paul’s has committed to sponsoring a refugee family through the Diocese. He suggested that giving them a ‘heads up’ could be useful in helping us negotiate any potential blockages down the road. The committee agreed and Bill said that he would send emails to Andy Fillmore, M.P., Labi Kousoulis, M.L.A. Mayor Mike Savage and Councillor Waye Mason.

1. **Engaging our Youth:**

Derek introduced the topic by saying he felt it was important that our youth be involved, as they have much to offer. Nathan said that, for example, they could make crafts to sell and raise funds. Derek reported that he had met with Martine Osler earlier in the week and that she had suggested doing something during Advent, e.g., a four-part series on refugees in the Bible. Derek reminded us that Jesus and his parents became refugees very early in his life.

1. **Other Business:** None
2. **Next Meeting: Parish House, November 8, at 9:15 am.**

John gave his regrets in advance.