



Together We Respond to the Gospel

The pastoral letter from Archbishop Bernard Longley read out in our parishes recently, reminds us to respond with love and compassion to refugees from Syria and other war-torn countries and to remember the words of Our Lord 'In as much as you did it to the least of my brothers and sisters you did it to me'. This follows Pope Francis' request that all parishes show care and support towards these vulnerable people.

Locally there are church groups and others already providing excellent care and we seek to support them now, and also when Syrian refugees are sent to our locality. Archbishop Longley supports our efforts. See below how you might help.

Destitute Asylum Seekers

The African Social Health Agency (ASHA) hosts a fortnightly British Red Cross drop-in for destitute Asylum Seekers and offers access via the internet or phone to solicitors, The Refugee Council and other agencies that may assist. ASHA volunteers are themselves people seeking asylum. Asylum seekers become destitute because Government policies do not provide support for people who have had their claims rejected. They have no legal right to housing, welfare benefit or support, nor are they allowed to work. There are various reasons why failed asylum seekers do not return to their country of origin. For example, they may have no documentation to say where they came from and without evidence no country will accept them. They become stateless. Donate food, good quality clothing and toys.

Contact: angela.glendenning@gmail.com or phone 01782 616368

Sanctus St Mark's

A weekly drop in centre for asylum seeker and refugees. A non-judgemental, friendly and safe space providing activities, support and signposting to local organisations and agencies. Current activities include: family activities for parents with young children encouraging play and learning in English, English classes, craft sessions, food distribution, second hand clothes and essential equipment distribution, befriending and one to one support and advice. Free refreshments provided.

You can help by giving some of your time and using your skills on a Wednesday morning, by supporting the collection, sorting and distribution of good quality second hand clothes and essential equipment for the home, by donating dried and tinned food, by going with our new friends to appointments and interviews and in many other ways. Sanctus takes place every Wednesday 10.30am to 12.30pm at St Mark's Church, Shelton, Broad Street, Shelton. ST1 4LJ.

For more information contact Deana Korwin at deanakk@outlook.com.

Burslem Jubilee Project

The Burslem Jubilee Project offers support, companionship and activities to all asylum seekers and refugees within the local community. We provide a safe, welcoming and non-judgemental environment in which attendees are able to experience companionship through interaction with individuals from similar communities. The project provides ESOL English language lessons, and IT is available to support their development and understanding of the English language. We have indoor and outdoor activities which includes family fun days.

The project needs food, pampers, baby and adult clothing, and any donations towards the transporting of the attendees to the project. We meet every Thursday at Burslem Light-house, Moorland Road, Burslem ST6 1DW, 10am – 2.30pm Please Contact: Sheila Podmore 07958 250281 or Dianne Yeadon 07532 108207

Manna House

Based at the Baptist Church in Hanley, Manna House attracts well over 100 visitors each week. Many are local homeless people who suffer from addictions. Hot meals are provided every Thursday evening between 6 - 9pm and a lunch bag of sandwiches, biscuits and a cold drink are given out for the next day. We provide shower facilities and offer a change of clothing, underwear and shoes. Our other hand-out bags include toiletries and non-perishable food items and sleeping bags and blankets are always available to those in need. A breakfast is served every Tuesday morning between 9.30am - 12 noon and coffee and snacks are served every Wednesday morning. Our outreach to asylum seekers and refugees takes place on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. The women who attend are taught how to sew, (using the 4 or 5 sewing machines provided) knit and cook. We provide love and support and they enjoy their fellowship together over tea and coffee. We are grateful for donations of many of the above items and are happy to pass on anything that we are given (including furniture and household items).

If you would like to help, contact Pastor Trevor Nicklin, 07828 924522, email: hanleybaptistchurch@googlemail.com