



The Asylum Seekers Project

The Asylum Seekers Project is a grass roots, ecumenical, non-partisan, humanitarian effort to raise awareness of asylum seekers' plight in the United States and those in Mexico awaiting entry into the United States and to identify and support other organizations providing humanitarian assistance to asylum seekers..

Inspiration for the Asylum Seekers Project is Isaiah 58:10: If you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday.

In the fall of 2019, two members of the Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist, Jessica Clark and Debi Goebel, spurred on by the desire to be of some humanitarian assistance to the thousands of men, women, and children awaiting entry at the Texas border, found St. John's Episcopal Church in McAllen, Texas. The church, located near the McAllen Border Patrol Processing Center, the largest detention center in the United States, is five miles from the Rio Grande River. For two years, parishioners ministered to the detainees by preparing and delivering food and collecting donations to purchase clothing, backpacks, toiletries, medicine, sleeping bags, blankets, etc.

In January 2019, the United States' Remain in Mexico policy, termed Migrant Protection Policy or MPP, was instituted. Approximately 60,000 asylum seekers, primarily from Honduras, Guatemala, or El Salvador in U.S. border facilities were returned to Mexico to await hearings to determine their fate. The Border Patrol Processing Center in McAllen became virtually empty and with the border closed during the pandemic, all hearings are on hold.

In January 2020, the Asylum Seekers Project was approved by the vestry as a ministry of the Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist and announced to the public in newspaper articles

Our partner church, St. John's Episcopal Church in McAllen, turned their efforts to providing humanitarian assistance to approximately 2,500 asylum seekers living in a makeshift tent city or in makeshift shelters of boards and tarps in Matamoras, Mexico, across the border from Brownsville, Texas. Almost daily, volunteers load food and other provisions into garden carts and walk across the Brownsville, Texas bridge into Matamoras, Mexico.

Any donation, no matter how small, is urgently needed as the tent city residents face undue hardships and safety concerns as Hurricane Hanna continues to pound 75 MPH winds and cause major flooding in the area. The hurricane made landfall at 3:00 a.m. on Saturday blowing tents and makeshift shelters around or destroying them as the residents slept. The asylum seekers are also susceptible to the COVID-19 virus.

If you wish to donate, you may mail donations to Jessica Clark, 12685 Seashore Highway, Georgetown, Delaware 19947. She will ensure the donations reach our point of contact at St. John's Episcopal Church in Texas, Kathy Whittier. Or you can mail donations directly to Kathy Whittier, 1645 S. Bentsen Palm Drive, Unit C-50, Palmview, TX 78572. Please make the check out to St. John's Episcopal Church (our partner church in Texas) and put Asylum Seekers Project on the check memo line. Thank you in advance for your generous donations in this time of need.

If you have any questions about the Asylum Seekers Project, please email Jessica at jclark165@comcast.net or call (302) 430-2898.