Dear People of God:

How Will You Serve This Season?  
This week the number of refugees who are being released from ICE and CBP Detention Centers has climbed to more than 1, 000 people and the number will continue to grow. Many churches and non-profit agencies have been responding - to their best of their ability - to this new surge. These released refugees have been granted legal status by the US Government, while they wait for their day in immigration court. In the meantime, they have been given permission to travel inside the US to be with their sponsors (family or friends).

Regardless of our personal political and ideological convictions, I believe this is an opportunity to help our government process as many people as possible, and help the released refugees get to their destination as soon as possible.  
There is a coalition of church-related temporary hospitality centers in El Paso and Las Cruces that regularly have been able to receive 750 refugees per week. What these churches have been doing is nothing short of miraculous.  
But with the new numbers of released individuals what the shelters have been doing is no longer enough (Tobin Park shelter was receiving only 90 refugees every other week). To that end, we need to significantly increase the number of refugees we receive. Beginning next week, the Shelter at Tobin Park United Methodist Church (operated by a coalition of churches) will start operating almost every day of the week. We will receive 90 refugees on Tuesday and 90 on Thursday. The Shelter at El Calvario United Methodist Church in Las Cruces will continue to receive from 30-50 refugees every week (they usually receive their guests on Tuesdays).

We now need to recruit the volunteers necessary to respond effectively to the new surge in our shelters both in El Paso and Las Cruces.  
We need volunteers for intakes, travel arrangements, transportation, clothing bank, etc. We especially need groups willing to commit to provide the many needed meals. In addition, we will need donations of meals, hygiene items, new underwear (men, women, children), winter coats, tot bags, boxes of fruit, blankets, and other items listed below:  
-Fresh Fruit---40lbs apples  
---40lbs clementines---40lbs bananas  
---Grapes appreciated  
-Infant Formula  
-Diapers: Costco/Sam's club size boxes (or equivalent) ---Size 2: 4 boxes  
---Size 3: 3 boxes  
---Size 4: 1 box  
---Size 5: 4 boxes  
-Baby Wipes  
-Travel size toiletries  
---shampoo and conditioner  
---lotion  
---toothpaste  
---body wash or bars of soap

Please take your in-kind contributions of the items listed above directly to the churches of El Calvario and Tobin Park.

We accept financial contributions. These can be sent directly, and checks can be made to El Calvario UMC and to Tobin Park UMC. Write on Memo: “Refugee Ministry.”  
El Calvario UMC  
300 N Campo St, Las Cruces, NM 88001

Tobin Park UMC  
9410 Roanoke Dr. El Paso, TX 79924

Contact Information:  
Rev. George Miller at El Calvario UMC (575) 524-1230  
Supply Pastor James Heredia at Tobin Park UMC (915) 755-7146

We are preparing for a long commitment so, above all things, we need your prayers for all those who are part of this ministry: the families of refugees, our Government agencies, our church-related shelters, every volunteer, and those in leadership of these efforts.  
  
Rev. Dr. Eduardo Rivera  
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