The St. Mark's community is focusing (during the Easter Season) on issues of social justice. The timing of Passover and Easter always coincide since they are determined by the lunar calendar and the full moon. Concurrently, this year, the period of Ramadan began just a little more than a week after Easter and Passover. So these are important times for all Abrahamic believers to pause and reflect on our moral imperatives as members of the human family and children of God . The period of Ramadan is a time when Muslims particularly focus on *zakat* (or charity and helping others). Perhaps we want to consider this as well.

The Covid pandemic and the plague of racism have heightened our consciousness during the past year, so most of us have already begun to deeply consider our own duty of solidarity in relationship to others beyond our own community and to our planet on Earth Day.

We, people of the Christian and Jewish traditions, have been taught to care for the "stranger". The Quran instructs our Muslim brothers and sisters to welcome the "wayfarer". Sadly, too many become strangers, migrants and wayfarers because of conflict, persecution, climate change, or other inhumane conditions beyond our imagination. These "wayfarers", who have been forced into migration, grieve leaving their homes and families they love because of unimaginable tragedies. In response to concern for these migrants, five years ago, St. Mark's joined others in a refugee resettlement coalition providing housing and a safety net of support. In partnership with Lutheran Social Services and other refugee agencies, we volunteer under the banner of Good Neighbors Capitol Hill. http://www.goodneighborscapitolhill.org

Most of the families assigned to GNCH in the past have been from Afghanistan and Iraq because of the serious risk to individuals who served with the U.S. military or embassy staff. We have also helped a few Salvadoran families who were fleeing the terror of gang violence and a Ugandan asylum seeker. The prospect of more Central American families is probable, but the crisis at our southern border is complicated and the refugees we are receiving have been vetted and waiting (sometimes for years) to gain a place in the quota before their arrival.

Your participation with GNCH as a Donor, Volunteer or Friend helps to establish hope in practical ways, enabling families to recreate a safe, viable life in the United States, just as so many of our grandparents or great-grandparents did. Some of us would not be here today, had it not been for the solidarity and welcome of faithful people to earlier generations of refugees and immigrants who have contributed to the rich fabric of our society. Please consider becoming a part of GNCH.