



South Dakota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

December 20, 2019

The Honorable Governor Kristi Noem
Office of the Governor
500 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Governor Kristi Noem:

On behalf of over 200 congregations and 100,000 members of the South Dakota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, I graciously thank you for your decision to consent in allowing refugees to arrive in our state. As Lutherans, our faith consistently calls us to welcome the stranger among us. We, the Church, live out this call through the ministry of Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota. The resettlement ministry of LSS, has made a commitment to this work since 1948 in the aftermath of World War II. As the Church, we are honored to be invited into this partnership.

In this season of Advent, as we wait for Emmanuel —God with us, I am reminded of the Christ child's family on that first Christmas. Shortly after Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph were forced to leave their home behind because of persecution. During this tumultuous time in history, and in their family, they were able to find a new home for safety and reprieve in a new country. I would like to think that this story of Mary and Joseph compares to the lives of many of our South Dakota newcomers.

Thank you for helping us to live out God's command to welcome the stranger and to provide for the most vulnerable among us.

In His Service,

Bishop Constanze Hagmaier
South Dakota Synod, ELCA