



MATTHIAS MIDWEEK

Inspired by the life and compassion of Jesus Christ,
We are a church of action in our community, engaging in
Hospitality by offering bread for body and soul

A GIFT FOR THE NEW YEAR!

I think it was 2013, though it might have been 2012 when I received a call from the new director of ERICA (Episcopal Refugee and Immigrant Center Alliance). Did I know anyone who could house a new asylee from Rwanda?

His name was Darius Ndoli. He had escaped persecution in Rwanda and landed in the United States at the end of May. Somehow he found his way to ERICA's doorstep by September. Betty Symington, the director, called to ask me if I had any suggestions for where he might stay for a time -- say three months.

He came and three months turned into three and a half years, as Darius waited for his application for asylum to be processed. In all, he waited four and one half years to first receive a green card and then to officially receive asylum in the United States. All this time he was separated from his family: his pregnant wife Madrine and four year old son, Promise. Four months after he fled Rwanda, his daughter Sacha was born.

Darius was introduced to St. Matthias when he came with me on Sunday mornings. As time went on he was able to get part-time jobs, which mostly precluded Sunday attendance, but he never forgot the reception he had received from this community. We celebrated his 32nd birthday with the first party he has ever had. He introduced us to Rwanda - it's beauty and its troubles. Through him, we learned of the hard hurdles of the refugee -- long before the great migration from Syria and Libya.

Most of what little money Darius was able to earn went back to his family with whom he was able to communicate through Skype. As the years went by, I admit to becoming a bit pessimistic about the chances of the family being reunited -- especially after the more significant immigration measures imposed by the Trump administration.

But, miraculously, last Fall, the bureaucratic quagmire began to shift. Madrine and the children were interviewed at the American embassy, were given intensive medical exams (including DNA testing for the children), and were issued passports. ERICA loaned money for airline tickets and on Christmas Eve, 2017 at 7:30pm they landed at Dulles airport. Darius was there to meet them and he hasn't stopped smiling since. On New Years Eve during our Sunday service, he proudly presented his African family to us, his American family. Our hearts are full!

God is good,

ANN+

THIS WEEK

THURSDAY, JANUARY 4:

6:30 PM: AA, Parish Hall

7:00 PM: Choir Practice, Sanctuary

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6:

11:30 AM: Noonday Prayer, Sanctuary

11:00 AM - 2:00 PM: Loaves & Fishes

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7: FEAST OF EPIPHANY

9:30 AM: St. Matthias Worship

10:45: Reception for the Ndoli family

11:30 AM: Rebirth Worship

1:30 PM: Renewed Minds Worship

TUESDAY, JANUARY 9:

7:00 - 9:00 PM: Renewed Minds Addiction Group, Undercroft

SATURDAY, JANUARY 13:

9:30 AM: Vestry Meeting, Undercroft

SUNDAY, JANUARY 28:

We say goodbye to Ann+

EVERYONE:

A special party to celebrate the reunion of the Ndoli family is scheduled for this Sunday, January 7. A pot luck lunch will be held right after our service. If you don't cook, or don't wish to cook, bring some chips, pretzels, juice/soda etc. Regardless, please join us for this happy occasion.

Questions? Email Beth:
bethch58@gmail.com



OUR PRAYERS

Mary Ross

Arthur Sulaiman

Otis Cutler

Ann Morton

Rebirth and Renewed Minds Ministries

Those without shelter in this cold season