

CHRIST CHURCH BANGKOK

POLICY FOR THE SUPPORT OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN BANGKOK

March 2025

Christ Church has a significant number of refugees, and asylum seekers worshipping on a Sunday and participating in the full range of weekday activities that occur within the church community. The church has always had an 'open door' policy to all Christian believers, from anywhere in the world, and to all seekers after the Christian faith.

Many asylum seekers live in vulnerable situations. Christ Church has a responsibility to protect our more vulnerable members.

How does Christ Church support Refugees and Asylum Seekers?

- By encouraging full participation in our worship, and by enabling all members to exercise their gifts in appropriate ways.
- By offering free refreshments on Sundays to those who are financially challenged.
- By providing English language and Thai language learning groups when available once a week.
- By a regular, weekly, visiting team to the Immigration Detention Centre.
- By working with Life Raft to provide financial support for asylum seeker families within the church. (A significant proportion of our annual charitable giving goes to our refugees and asylum seekers through Life Raft).
- Through personal acts of friendship, support and teaching, which are often unseen and unrecorded.

Code of Procedure

Christ Church takes its responsibilities towards the pastoral care of all its members seriously. We seek to express this in the following ways.

- Church leadership should exercise caution in how they talk about asylum seekers in public forums, and with whom they talk. They should never share personal information.
- Christ Church should constantly monitor how, and where, we present information about members at all times.
- All electronic information should be stored carefully, and never shared with any third party. It should be noted that neither clergy nor the church office are authorized to

divulge emails or phone numbers of any church members without the express permission of the person concerned, under any circumstances.

- Printed information should not draw attention to asylum seekers or urban refugees.
- Special care should be taken with the use of social media to ensure that no compromising pictures of, or written information about, asylum seekers is posted.
- The church leadership and PCC are responsible for addressing issues of practical concern as soon as they are identified.
- Church leaders and PCC members are authorised to challenge people who appear to be taking inappropriate photographs on the church compound, especially if these include non-related people.

Our responsibility, especially PCC members, is to remain vigilant and on the lookout for anything outside the "norm". Report any incidents to the Administrator or Vicar.

Ushers at church services should notify the Administrator and / or the Vicar of any unusual activity that they observe.

In the Event of a Visit by the Immigration Police or Tourist Police

The Vicar or Administrator needs to have available a Thai-speaking member of CCB **to call immediately**, who would know how to communicate with Government officials and could act as a spokesperson for the church. Two such people who are willing to help are: Dr. Ben Vongsuly and Domnapha Sukkree, a Thai lawyer with her own law firm. Both of these Thai-English speaking members of CCB have regular interaction with various members of the Royal Thai Government.

Contact details for Dr Ben and for Dorna will be held by members of the Church staff, and church wardens, and be kept in a safe place in the church office - known only to staff members. All PCC members have phone numbers for the vicar and administrator. It might be advisable to have at least two more names to be sure that someone is always available.

Actions moving forward

- CCB Vicar, leadership team and PCC should be fully conversant with this document, and ready to act upon it.
- New PCC members should be made aware of this document at the beginning of their term of office.
- CCB Vicar/Leadership team should meet regularly with refugees/ asylum seekers in order that they have the opportunity to participate in the on- going discussion about their safety.
- Suitably qualified members of CCB should work with BASRAN (Bangkok Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance Network) and consult with Thai lawyers, to see what possibilities may exist that would assist the process of supporting asylum seekers and refugees, including those being detained in IDC.