

United Methodist Church, Kansas Area
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Central States Synod
Catholic Bishops of Kansas
Episcopal Church Dioceses of Kansas

February, 2008

The question was asked of Jesus *who is my neighbor?* Jesus answered with the story of the Good Samaritan. *Anyone who needs me, and whom I can help is my neighbor.* For Jesus this path of loving our neighbor brings us to an encounter with God. To close our eyes to our neighbor blinds us to God.

When Jesus speaks of the ultimate judgment, all those judged are surprised that they did not recognize *him* in those people *in need*. He reminds us that it is precisely in *those in need* that we can see him and can choose to serve him or not.

We understand that many Kansans are perplexed and troubled by the presence of a large number of undocumented immigrants in our state and country. We share their concern. Illegal immigration is not good for society or the person migrating. We urge our parishioners – and all Kansans – to reject attacks on immigrants and to work together toward a humane resolution of the problem of illegal immigration.

We acknowledge the right and necessity of our country to maintain our borders and enforce our laws. We caution that while doing so, our government must respect human rights and dignity and minimize the separation of families.

We ask President Bush and our Kansas Congressional Delegation to give serious attention to the issues related to undocumented workers, their families, and their impact on the life and economy of our country and state. We urge them to work for comprehensive reform that maintains the integrity of our borders, makes temporary visas available for those willing to work, provides fair and equitable rules and reasonable time frames for processing applications to become legal residents, offers compassionate rules and practical time frames for family reunification for legal resident aliens and naturalized citizens, sets reasonable requirements for legal residents to become citizens, and recognizes the impact of globalization and free trade on patterns of immigration.

We ask Governor Sebelius and our Kansas Legislators to resist the frustration caused by the inactivity of our Federal government and to refuse to react to a fear that seems to focus on people in our State who for the most part are here because they or their parents want to work. We ask them to work for laws that benefit and support all people of our State.

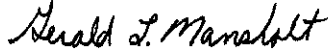
As we travel Kansas and are in and out of local parishes we meet people who are afraid...afraid of losing their jobs, homes, families. They are looking for neighbors. They work in our meatpacking plants, dairies, feedlots, service industries. They work on our ranches, construction sites, hog farms. They work. Can we continue to benefit from the fruits of their labor, on one hand, and relegate them to an underclass without full protection of the law on the other? We meet people who are afraid that our laws are not working and that something is badly broken. We know that so many of those who are fearful are at the same time instinctively neighborly. Will their fears be allayed by passing more laws that cannot work and will cast more people living in Kansas into the shadows with less trust and confidence in our laws?

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We ask our parishioners, other Christians, all people of faith, and all people of good will to resist fear, seize hold of hope, make justice our aim so that all living in Kansas may work together for the good and welfare of one another and not pit one against another. May we live out of our Kansas neighborliness that is at the heart of the message of Jesus.



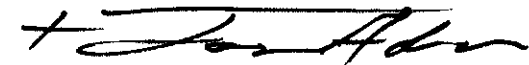
Scott J. Jones
Resident Bishop, the United Methodist Church, Kansas Area



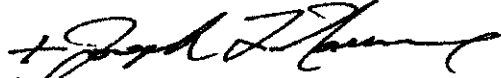
Bishop Gerald Mansholt
Central States Synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



The Right Reverend Dean E. Wolf
Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas



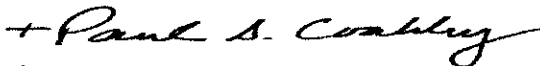
The Right Reverend James M. Adams, Jr.
Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Kansas



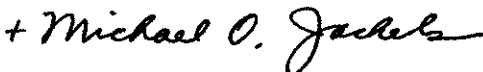
The Most Reverend Joseph F. Naumann
Archbishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas



The Most Reverend Ronald M. Gilmore
Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Dodge City



The Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley
Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Salina



The Most Reverend Michael O. Jackels
Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Wichita