

## **Welcoming Migrants in Our Midst**

**Rationale:** The United Methodist Church affirms the worth, dignity, and inherent value and rights of all persons regardless of their nationality or legal status. Yet we have neighbors, co-workers, friends who have been separated from their loved ones or are living in fear of their families being torn apart through our broken immigration system. We have sisters and brothers around the world fleeing violence and hunger and searching for a safe place.

**Whereas,** Kansas and Nebraska are made up of many immigrants who have migrated to our states seeking safety, security and prosperity; and

**Whereas,** immigrants and refugees are contributing members of our communities and many of them sit in the pews and are behind the pulpits of United Methodist Churches in the Great Plains Conference; and

**Whereas,** we have benefitted by the leadership of immigrants and refugees. They have added to our witness for Christ as we have all dedicated ourselves to the church's mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world; and

**Whereas,** the writer of Leviticus commands the love of the immigrant, who "shall be to you as the citizen among you." (Leviticus 19:33-34); and

**Whereas** early in Jesus' life, he was a refugee to Africa fleeing persecution and violence in his homeland (Matthew 2:13-15). Jesus told us that nations would be judged on the basis of the way they fed the hungry, welcomed the stranger, clothed the naked, cared for the prisoner (Matthew 25:31-46); and

**Whereas**, hateful and divisive rhetoric and actions by leaders in our government and others have ignited xenophobic and racist attitudes and actions among some of our fellow citizens including government employees;

**Therefore be it resolved** that we in the Great Plains Conference of The United Methodist Church, as followers of Jesus, commit ourselves to work to eliminate racism and violence directed toward newly arriving migrants from all parts of the world as well as those who have lived and worked among us for some time and that we express our opposition to any immigration policy that excludes refugees solely on the basis of their religion or national origin;

**Be it further resolved** that the Great Plains Conference encourages all churches to educate and equip their members to provide hospitality and welcome to migrants and refugees in their communities (the Resolution approved by General Conference "Welcoming the Migrant to the United States" would be an excellent resource); and to take further actions and advocate for just policies through prayer and discernment;

**Be it further resolved** that the Great Plains Conference calls upon our political leaders and policy makers to assure our laws affirm the worth, dignity, inherent values and rights of immigrants.

**Be it further resolved** that the Great Plains Conference calls upon our political leaders and policy makers to continue to accept refugees and grant asylum based on the need of those seeking our help, such as victims of natural disaster, innocent victims of war, or persons whose lives are in danger due to political issues, and not based on how a person might benefit the United States.

**Implemented by:** Great Plains Conference, Mercy & Justice Team, Refugee Ministry Task Force,  
Immigration Rapid Response Team

**This resolution was adopted on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at the Great Plains Annual Conference.**