

RESOLUTION: Compassionate Immigration Reform

Rationale: Our current immigration laws are broken. They cause great suffering for many people and tear families apart. Scripture challenges us numerous times to welcome the stranger and our Social Principles say that “we recognize, embrace, and affirm all persons, regardless of country of origin, as members of the family of God.” (United Methodist Book of Discipline, III. The Social Community ¶162 H Rights of Immigrants)
“And when a stranger sojourns with you in your land, do not oppress him/her. Let the stranger ... be to you as the native-born, and you shall love him/her as yourself.” Lev. 19:33, 34

Whereas, we recognize that the reality of today’s migration is mainly a consequence of economic powers in place between nations that create more inequalities abroad and in our own land and force individuals to look for ways to survive. And,

Whereas, the present system has created great suffering with heartbreaking consequences; many people have died tragically trying to cross the border, children and families have been separated due to deportation, and several Hispanic/Latino congregations have been decimated. And,

Whereas, we rejoice that the political climate in our nation has changed, opening the space for a just and humane reform of the immigration laws of our country. And,

Whereas, as persons of faith we recognize this moment as a call to do the moral and right actions that will recognize the human and civil rights of our immigrant brothers and sisters, allowing them to come out of the shadows into a life of peace and hope. And,

Whereas, this is a call to radical hospitality based on the recognition of essential relatedness acknowledging that faithfulness of the church is measured by how we treat and advocate for the most vulnerable in our societies. And,

Whereas, while we are encouraged by the many voices calling for comprehensive immigration reform we remain concerned that there are proposals that do not include all the actions needed to create a just and humane reform of our immigration laws.

Therefore be it resolved that we call on every United Methodist in the Great Plains Annual Conference to openly and devotedly advocate before the US Congress for changes that will reunify families, protect separated children, provide a path for citizenship, protect the rights of all workers including the undocumented, and recognize the gifts and the contributions that immigrants are making to our nation.

Therefore be it further resolved that the Great Plains Annual Conference join the Interagency Task Force on Immigration of The United Methodist Church who is calling all United Methodists in our nation to join in prayer and in acts of advocacy until a just and humane reform of our system of immigration is achieved that includes the following principles:

- 1) Stop all deportations, keeping families together, with the exception of deportations based on criminal activity, while Congress acts on a comprehensive reform.
- 2) Ask state governments to care for and protect children who have been separated from their parents by immigration raids and deportations until they are once again reunited with their parents.
- 3) Request Congress to adopt the DREAM Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) in its entirety.
- 4) Solicit that all DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) be included in the Affordable Health Care Act.
- 5) Persuade the Federal Government to continue to challenge the legality of the State anti-immigration laws.
- 6) Advocate that any immigration reform includes a path to full citizenship.
- 7) Denounce any incident of racial profiling that takes place anywhere in our nation.
- 8) Protect all workers from exploitation and unfair competition.

Implemented by: The Great Plains Conference Cabinet, the Mercy and Justice Team, the Immigration Rapid Response Team, and the Communications Department.

Time Frame: Between July 2014 and June 2015

Date: March 14, 2014

Signatures:

Members of the Great Plains Mercy and Justice Team –

Nancy Brown	Rev. Kurt Cooper	Rev. Stephanie Ahlschwede
Louise Niemann	Jerry Feese	Katie Lamb
Rev. Cindy Karges*	Rev. Kent Little	Sarah Godbey
Andrea Paret*	Rev. Jamie Norwich	Debora Cox
Rev. Hyun-Jin Cho*	McLennan*	Rev. Bonnie McCord
Rev. Sarah Marsh*	Rev. Pat Longstroth	Rev. Alan Gager
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*also member of the GP Immigration Rapid Response Team

Signatures continued:

Members of the Great Plains Immigration Rapid Response Team –

Sandy Sypherd	Corey Godbey	Rev. Fay Hubbard
Rev. Cesar Duran	Cindy Whitsell	Juan Carlos Veloso
Rev. Dyton L. Owen	Olga Hennessey	Rev. Lance Clay
Tori Osler	Jan Mason	Rev. Jim Miller
Rev. Mark Crist	Amy Pinger	Micole Harms-Brazell
Rev. Theresa Mason	Kathy Griffith	Judy Reimer
Karen Baker	Rita Halderman	Ella Rathod
Rev. Kurt Stecker	Carolyn Edwards	
Rev. Javier Rios	Amy Prior	

Clergy and Laity from across the Conference –

Marilyn Zehring	Ernestine Adams	Patricia Gollner
Cruz Guerra	Diana Halstead	Brent Gollner
Susan Perry	Steve Johnson	Rev. Karen Lamb
Melva Kube	Rev. Cesar E. Garcia	Roger Selley
LaRene Konopasek	Rodriguez	Sharon Selley
Rev. Keith Johnson	Rev. Sergio Tristan	Gerald Wakeley
Sandy Griffiths	Andrea Palacios	Mary Wakeley
Rev. Dan Flanagan	Judy Aspen	Karen Warner
Rev. Carol Windrum	Sylvia Romero	Stephen Warner
Rev. Kay Alnor	Tania Montero	Anne Kallesen
Rev. Lowen Kruse	Gabriel Marrero	Douglas Kallesen
Rev. David Lux	Miriam Peralta Gandarilla	Rev. Sam Rathod
Rev. Eduardo Bousson	Jose Manuel Miranda	Rev. Baldeo Singh
Rev. Stephen Griffith	Deb Brandt	Shobha Singh
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Submitted by:

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This resolution was adopted at the Great Plains Conference on June 14, 2014 with an amendment to change “forcefully” to “devotedly” on page 1.