

Our Sinful Immigration System

Rationale: Immigrants are living in fear because they are increasingly victimized by family separation, detention, deportation, raids, and acts of hate and violence. They are judged and treated inhumanely because of their immigration status, their country of origin, race, religion, or other differences. Christians are called to respond to situations of great suffering such as this.

WHEREAS, Jesus himself identified himself as being one with the stranger in the land (Matthew 25:35), and the people of God are called to regard the sojourner as “one of your citizens” and love them as we do ourselves (Leviticus 19:33-34); and

WHEREAS, the United Methodist Book of Resolutions calls on United Methodists to “strengthen their resolve to be faithful to respond to the needs of others, particularly as we face laws, whose primary intent is to discourage Christians from fulfilling their mission to love and help the neighbor. We remember when the apostles were faced by similar circumstances after authorities wanted to impede the fulfillment of their mission, they firmly declared in Acts 5:29: ‘We must obey God rather humans!’ hence the Christian mandate to engage in civil disobedience when laws and policies deem to be unjust.” (2016 Book of Resolutions #3284).

WHEREAS, the United Methodist Church’s Social Principles “recognize, embrace, and affirm all persons, regardless of country of origin, as members of the family of God. We affirm the right of all persons to equal opportunities for employment, access to housing, health care, education, and freedom from social discrimination. We urge the Church and society to recognize the gifts, contributions, and struggles of those who are immigrants and to advocate for justice for all. We oppose immigration policies that separate family members from each other or that include detention of families with children, and we call on local churches to be in ministry with immigrant families.” (§2016 Book of Discipline)

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Great Plains Conference calls upon our churches and their members to oppose legislation, purporting to be immigration reform, that prevents family reunification, prioritizes corporate profit over the relief of human suffering, and values security over the lives and well-being of those hoping to escape poverty and violence and seeking a better life in this country.

THEREFORE, 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 and refugees and make the words of Emma Lazarus

"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

inscribed on a plaque mounted inside the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty true once again.

Implemented by: Great Plains Conference Secretary; Great Plains Conference congregations; Great Plains Mercy & Justice Team; Great Plains Immigration Rapid Response Team

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119 Signatures from laity and clergy across Kansas and Nebraska

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