

CALL TO SANCTUARY

WHEREAS as God's people we are called to love the stranger in our midst knowing that we were once strangers in a foreign land (Lev 19:34).

WHEREAS as God's people we are called to welcome the stranger in our midst because in so doing we welcome Christ who promises to be present among those in need of shelter (Mt 25:31-46).

WHEREAS as a Lutheran Community we have deep roots within immigrant populations and a long history of welcoming migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers as well as advocating for just immigration policies.

WHEREAS immigrant peoples make a significant social, economic, cultural, and faith contribution to our communities.

WHEREAS there is an increased hostility directed toward immigrant peoples and aggressive enforcement practices by U.S. immigration authorities including increases in the deportation of those with no criminal record.

WHEREAS these sweeping deportation actions are dividing families and separating parents from their children causing "psychological trauma, residential instability, and family dissolution..." (Migration Policy Institute).

WHEREAS the threat to eliminate the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) creates instability and an uncertain future for thousands of young people in our communities and families

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we as the New England Synod of the ELCA declare ourselves to be a Sanctuary Synod in opposition to the current administration's policy for a massive deportation of undocumented immigrants.

RESOLVED, that the New England Synod, as a Sanctuary Synod, coordinate and draw upon resources from local and national sanctuary movements as well as immigrant rights groups such as LIRS, the Matthew 25 Movement, Sanctuary Not Deportation, the Southwest California Synod, etc. in order to enhance our efforts in education, organizing, advocacy and direct actions to promote the safety and well-being of the undocumented community and, be it further

RESOLVED that the congregations, institutions and ministries of the New England Synod be encouraged to become sanctuary communities providing refuge and pastoral support for those at risk of deportation as well as advocacy in defense of immigrant rights and, be it further

RESOLVED the New England Synod assist in equipping our congregations, institutions and ministries to engage in these expressions of sanctuary, appropriate to local contexts, capacity and discernment.

Pastor Kim Erno (Franklin Alliance for Rural Ministries, Swanton, VT)

Pastor John Longworth (Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Rutland, VT)

Pastor Nancy Wright (Ascension Lutheran Church, S. Burlington, VT)
Pastor Peggy Yingst (Trinity Lutheran Church, Brattleboro, VT)