

## RESPONDING TO THE UNITED STATES FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S ATTACK ON IMMIGRANTS, MIGRANTS, AND REFUGEES

(Sense of the assembly)

### Summary

This emergency resolution denounces the United States federal government's mass detention and deportation campaign, as well as the egregious human rights violations being committed against those who are being detained and deported. It also denounces the government's disregard of the civil and human rights of immigrants, migrants, and refugees, as demonstrated through the current Administration's attacks on humanitarian protection and due process, ongoing funding freezes, and the infringement on the religious rights of houses of worship to welcome and provide charity services to all people, regardless of their citizenship status. It calls on all settings of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, including General Ministries, Regions, and local congregations to provide additional support for Immigrant Welcoming and sanctuary congregations, and calls for prophetic action in solidarity with immigrants, migrants, and refugees in light of the current increase in anti-immigrant policies being implemented by the federal government.

### Biblical, Theological, and Historical Grounding

As Christians, we believe that all people, including immigrants, are made in the image of God. This is demonstrated throughout the Bible, including in Leviticus 19:33-34 ("When an immigrant resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the immigrant. The immigrant who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the immigrant as yourself, for you were immigrants in the land of Egypt;"), Matthew 25:35 ("for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,...") and Mark 12:31 ("... 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."). Yet the federal government's policies on immigration fail to respect the God-given dignity of every person and our call to welcome the stranger.

**WHEREAS** on January 29, 2025, President Trump signed an executive order to expand immigration detention in Guantanamo Bay Prison Camp. Detainees were not given a trial before being transferred to the Prison Camp. Administration officials have not

offered evidence to support their claim that those moved to Guantanamo are gang members, and most of the immigrants whose identities have become public did not have criminal records<sup>1</sup>; and

**WHEREAS** on January 29, 2025, President Trump signed into law the Laken Riley Act, which applies mandatory immigration detention solely on the basis of an arrest or charge for a theft-related offense, without any opportunity to even request release on bond, risking the detention of people innocent of the charges brought against them. Prolonged detention without access to an individualized bail or bond hearing denies the accused their day in court – a constitutional right<sup>2</sup>; and

**WHEREAS** on March 15, 2025, the current administration invoked the Alien Enemies Act of 1798, a wartime law that was used to authorize the forcible internment of people of Japanese descent during World War II, to authorize the deportation of Venezuelan immigrants to mega prisons abroad. This law gives the President authority to remove nationals of a country that the U.S. is at war with, and the U.S. is not at war with Venezuela. These nationals were not given access to a trial, a right to appeal, or time to notify their families, in violation of the constitutional right to due process<sup>3</sup>; and

**WHEREAS** there have been multiple reports of green card visa holders with no criminal records being detained or deported by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)<sup>4</sup>, and in some cases, ICE has detained and sought to deport valid visa holders who participated in public protests<sup>5</sup>; and

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<sup>1</sup> “Trump Administration Sends a New Group of Migrants to Guantánamo Bay”, New York Times, March 20, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/20/us/politics/more-migrants-guantanamo-bay.html>; “Some Migrants Sent by Trump to Guantánamo Are Being Held by Military Guards,” New York Times, February 12, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/12/us/gitmo-migrants-trump.html>

<sup>2</sup> “Letter to Representatives Requesting A No Vote on the Laken Riley Act.” ACLU, March 25, 2025, <https://www.aclu.org/documents/letter-to-representatives-requesting-a-no-vote-on-the-laken-riley-act>

<sup>3</sup> “Judge Blocks Deportations of Venezuelans Under Wartime Law”, New York Times, March 15, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/15/us/politics/trump-alien-enemies-act-deportations-venezuelans.html>; “‘Nazis got better treatment,’ judge says of Trump administration’s Alien Enemies Act deportations”, ABC News, March 24, 2025, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/appeals-court-hear-arguments-deportation-alleged-venezuelan-gang/story?id=120094673>

<sup>4</sup> “Green Card Holder Who Has Been in US for 50 Years Detained by ICE”, Newsweek, March 24, 2025, <https://www.newsweek.com/lewelyn-dixon-green-card-detained-ice-2049154>; “The people legally in the U.S. who have been detained by ICE or refused entry”, The Independent, March 25, 2025, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/uspolitics/ice-detention-centres-american-citizens-tourists-b2720960.html>; “UW Medicine employee, green card holder detained by ICE in Tacoma”, KUOW NPR News, March 24, 2025, <https://www.kuow.org/stories/uw-medicine-employee-green-card-holder-detained-by-ice-in-tacoma>;

<sup>5</sup> “Columbia protester Yunseo Chung sues Trump administration to prevent deportation”, NBC News, March 25, 2025, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/columbia-protester-yunseo-chung-sues-trump-administration-prevent-deporcna197927>; “What We Know About the Arrest of Mahmoud Khalil”, Intelligencer, March 24, 2025, <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/mahmoud-khalil-columbia-student-pro-palestine-activist-what-we-know.html>

**WHEREAS** the Trump Administration has deported U.S. citizen children of undocumented immigrants, and detained indigenous people with U.S. citizenship<sup>6</sup>; and

**WHEREAS** the Trump Administration is contracting with private prisons to house detained immigrants. Government inspections for years have found evidence of negligence at private detention facilities, from a lack of access to medical care to unsanitary conditions, including problems that may have led to deaths of detainees. Lawsuits against the companies allege that programs paying detainees as little as \$1 a day to work is tantamount to illegal forced labor<sup>7</sup>; and

**WHEREAS** since January 20, 2025, the current administration has passed additional policies that violate the basic rights of immigrants, including:

- Suspending all border entries, including asylum-seekers, effectively ending asylum at the US-Mexico border, as well as revoking the legal status of immigrants previously protected by humanitarian parole programs, such as Ukrainians, Afghans, and the Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguan, and Venezuelan (CHNV) program<sup>8</sup>;
- Suspending the US Refugee Resettlement Program and freezing funding related to the Program<sup>9</sup>;
- Reinstating the “Remain in Mexico” policy, which forces asylum seekers to wait in Mexico while their cases are processed<sup>10</sup>;
- Attempting to deny birthright citizenship to certain immigrant children<sup>11</sup>;

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<sup>6</sup> “Tribal Nations Urge Citizens to Carry ID as ICE Raids Increase”, Native News Online, February 1, 2025, <https://nativenewsonline.net/currents/tribal-nations-urge-citizens-to-carry-id-as-ice-raids-increase>; “U.S. citizen child recovering from brain cancer removed to Mexico with undocumented parents”, NBC News, March 12, 2025;

<sup>7</sup> “Private Prisons Are Ramping Up Detention of Immigrants and Cashing In,” New York Times, March 7, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/07/us/politics/private-prisons-immigrants-detention-trump.html>

<sup>8</sup> “U.S. to revoke legal status of more than a half-million migrants, urges them to self deport”, CBS News, March 23, 2025, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/u-s-to-revoke-legal-status-of-over-a-half-million-migrants-chnv/>

<sup>9</sup> “Daily State of Play: Trump’s Indefinite Refugee Ban and Funding Halt”, Church World Service, March 24, 2025, <https://cwsglobal.org/blog/daily-state-of-play-trumps-indefinite-refugee-ban-and-funding-halt/>

<sup>10</sup> “Trump reinforces use of his ‘Remain in Mexico’ policy,” NPR News, January 20, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/01/20/g-s1-43802/trump-immigration-border-remain-in-mexico-policy>

<sup>11</sup> “Trump takes birthright citizenship to the Supreme Court,” NPR News, March 14, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/03/14/nxs1-5327552/trump-takes-birthright-citizenship-to-the-supreme-court>

- Restarting the detention of migrant families<sup>12</sup>;
- Rescinding the Sensitive Locations Guidance, allowing ICE to conduct raids in schools, hospitals, and places of worship<sup>13</sup>; and

**WHEREAS** some elected officials in the United States have chosen to portray immigrants as criminals, yet immigrants are statistically less likely to commit crimes than people born in the U.S., immigrants have had lower incarceration rates than native-born Americans for at least 150 years, and undocumented immigrants have lower felony arrest rates than legal immigrants or native-born Americans<sup>14</sup>; and

**WHEREAS** the current actions of the government against refugees, visa-holders, asylum seekers, and undocumented people leads many of these communities to remove themselves from public life, including attending church and being involved in their church community<sup>15</sup>; and

**WHEREAS** our Christian tradition affirms the belief that all people are made in God's image, including immigrants, migrants, and refugees, in accordance with the biblical teachings of Leviticus 19:33-34, Matthew 25:35, and Mark 12:31; and

**WHEREAS** the General Assembly meeting in Indianapolis, IN in 2017 passed the resolution GA1722 "On Becoming Immigrant Welcoming Congregations," which declared that congregations, ministries, organizations, and institutions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will continue to strive to respect and affirm the dignity of every child of God and to advocate for the fair and just treatment of immigrants and immigrant families in the United States and Canada.;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the 2025 General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting July 12-15, 2025, in Memphis, Tennessee affirms that all those made in God's image should be afforded basic human rights, including the constitutional right to due process.

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<sup>12</sup> "Trump administration preparing to restart immigrant family detention," NBC News, February 7, 2025, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/trump-administration-preparing-restart-immigrant-family-detentionrcna191230>

<sup>13</sup> "Trump scraps guidance limiting immigration arrests near sensitive locations," Reuters, January 21, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-scraps-guidance-limiting-immigration-arrests-near-certain-locations-2025-01-21/>

<sup>14</sup> "Immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than U.S.-born Americans, studies find," NPR News, March 8, 2024, <https://www.npr.org/2024/03/08/1237103158/immigrants-are-less-likely-to-commit-crimes-than-us-born-americans-studies-find>

<sup>15</sup> "Immigrant Communities in Hiding: 'People Think ICE Is Everywhere,'" New York Times, January 30, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/30/us/immigrant-communities-hiding-ice.html>

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the 2025 General Assembly, meeting July 12-15, 2025, in Memphis, Tennessee denounces all attempts by the federal government to violate the basic human rights of immigrants, migrants, and refugees.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the 2025 General Assembly, meeting July 12-15, 2025, in Memphis, Tennessee affirms that the federal government's actions towards immigrants, migrants, and refugees stand in violation of the Alien Enemies Act of 1798, the U.S. Constitution, and the 1951 Refugee Convention.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the 2025 General Assembly, meeting July 12-15, 2025, in Memphis, Tennessee denounces all violations of the constitution, federal law, and international human rights law committed by the current administration, including its abuse and misuse of the Alien Enemies Act, its denial of the constitutional right to due process for immigrants summarily deported or indefinitely detained, and its ending of the asylum seeker and refugee resettlement programs.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the 2025 General Assembly, meeting July 12-15, 2025, in Memphis, Tennessee calls on the General Ministries, Regions, and local congregations to reaffirm their commitment to protect, advocate for, and serve our immigrant, migrant, and refugee neighbors during a time of heightened anti-immigrant sentiment and xenophobia.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the 2025 General Assembly, meeting July 12-15, 2025, in Memphis, Tennessee calls on the General Ministries, Regions, and local congregations to speak prophetically in the public square regarding our call to love our neighbor and welcome the immigrant, whether that be through the context of public witness, public statements, legislative advocacy, legal action, ecumenical partnerships, or direct service.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the 2025 General Assembly, meeting July 12-15, 2025, in Memphis, Tennessee affirms the religious and constitutional rights of all Immigrant Welcoming and sanctuary congregations and all clergy to continue to welcome and serve immigrants, even as they face extreme threat by the federal government, as well as certain state and local governments, putting at risk the safety of their place of worship, their financial stability, and their very existence during a time of heightened xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the 2025 General Assembly, meeting July 12-15, 2025, in Memphis, Tennessee calls on the General Ministries, Regions, and local congregations to increase capacity and resources to support and advocate for

158 Immigrant Welcoming and sanctuary congregations during a time when their work is  
159 particularly important, relevant, and threatened.

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161 Signers:

162 Rev. Brian Frederick-Gray, Allisonville Christian Church, Indianapolis, IN

163 Rev. Lori Tapia, Iglesia Alas de Salvacion, Gilbert, AZ

164 Rev. Grace Kozac, Central Christian Church, Indianapolis, IN

165 Rev. Dr. Jose Martinez, MissioKC Church Kansas City, MO

166 Rev. Dan Adolphson, First Christian Church Minneapolis, MN

167 C Stonebraker-Martinez, Ohio Region representative

168 Rev. Laurie Anderson, Midway Hills Christian Church

169 Rev. Pedro Ramos Goycolea, Comunidad Limen, Tucson, AZ

170 Rev. Ailsa Guardiola Gonzalez, First Christian Church Tucson, AZ

171 Rev. Chris Dorsey, Central Christian Church, Indianapolis, IN

172 James E Barton II, Chalice Christian Church, Gilbert, AZ

173 Rev. Dr. Lara Blackwood Pickrel, Hillcrest Christian Church, Overland Park, KS

174 Isaac Ackerman, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Creve Coeur, IL

175 Erin Perry, Rock Bridge Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Columbia, MO

176 Rev. Stephen Underwood, Community Christian Church, Kansas City, MO

177 Rev. Mark Dingler, First Christian Church & WaterWay, Bentonville, AR

178 Rev. Sarah Zuniga, Allisonville Christian Church, Indianapolis, IN

179 Rev. Katie Sexton, Arizona Faith Network

180 Ella Gordon, First Christian Church Corvallis, OR

181 Maggie Lewis, First Christian Church Bedford, IN

182 Rev. Joshua Jackson, Allisonville Christian Church, Indianapolis, IN

183 Rev. Tyler Heston, Christ Church NYC

184 Rev. Alison Nicoll, University Christian Church, Fort Worth, TX

185 Rev. Cathy Cralle Jones, St. Paul's Christian Church, Raleigh, NC

186 Rev. Wesley King, Vine Street Christian Church, Nashville, TN

187 Rev. Brandon Gilvin, Central Christian Church, Lexington, KY

188 Rev. Angel Luis Rivera-Agosto, Iglesia Cristiana (Discipulos de Cristo) en Puerto  
189 Nuevo, San Juan PR

190 Rev. Diane Faires Beadle, St. Paul's Christian Church, Raleigh, NC

191 Michael Dirksen, Cascade Christian Church, Grand Rapids, MI

192 Rev. Allison Lanza, Ridglea Christian Church, Fort Worth, TX

193 Rev. Bere Gil Soto, Iglesia Hermandad Cristiana (Discipulos de Cristo), Indianapolis, IN

194 Rev. Wendy Davidson, Heart of the Rockies Christian Church, Fort Collins, CO

195 Noah Tennant, Central Christian Church, Weatherford, TX

196 Rev. Josh Toulouse, Glen Oak Christian Church, Peoria, IL

197 Rev. Erin Tyler, Fort Collins, CO, Disciples Minister with standing in the Central Rocky  
198 Mountain Region  
199 National Benevolent Association  
200 Mark D. Anderson, Union Avenue Christian Church, St. Louis, MO  
201 Rev. Brandon Proffitt, Evergreen Christian Church, Evergreen, CO  
202 Rev. Megan Peglar, University Christian Church, Austin, TX  
203 Rev. Richie Sanchez, Casa de Refugio,  
204 Rev. Dr. Alex Ruth, Parkway Christian Church in Springfield, IL  
205 Rev. Dani Loving Cartwright, First Christian Church, Duncanville, TX  
206 Rev. F. Feliberto Pereira, Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries  
207 Rev. Kevin Toth, First Christian Church Crawfordsville, IN  
208 Rev. Dr. Jack Sullivan, Jr., Member, Woodland Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),  
209 Columbus, OH; Co-President, Disciples Justice Action Network  
210 Allison Nash, Union Avenue Christian Church, St. Louis, MO  
211 Raiza Spratt, Murray Hills Christian Church, Beaverton, OR  
212 Michael Beadle, St. Paul's Christian Church, Raleigh, NC  
213 Emily Swett, Bethany Beach CC, Bethany Beach, DE  
214 Jeannie May, First Christian Church Willmington, NC  
215 Jennifer Sanchez, Galileo Christian Church, Fort Worth, TX  
216 Pam Rahr, Allisonville Christian Church, Indianapolis, IN  
217 Larry Rahr, Allisonville Christian Church, Indianapolis, IN  
218 John Bain, South Hills Christian Church, Edmond, OK  
219 Michael Grimm, Saint Andrew Christian Church, Dublin, OH  
220 Rev. Hannah Grimm, Gender Road Christian Church, Canal Winchester, OH  
221 Teresa Swihart, National City Christian Church, Washington, DC  
222 John M. Richardson, Beargrass Christian Church, Louisville, KY  
223 Rev. Troy Sybrant, Murray Hills Christian Church, Beaverton, OR  
224 Karyn Dix, First Christian Church Pendleton, OR  
225 Rev. Kelley Dick, Saguaro Christian Church, Tucson, AZ  
226 Lori Bryant, First Christian Church, Tucson, AZ  
227 Noa Kaufman-Nichols, First Christian Church, Tucson, AZ  
228 Julia Brown Karimu, Light of the World Christian Church, Indianapolis, IN  
229 Rev. Aaron Smith, Peachtree Christian Church, Atlanta, GA  
230 Kiah Smith, Peachtree Christian Church, Atlanta, GA