

RESOLUTION

RE: Response to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Raids and Detention

FROM: North Texas Conference Church and Society Task Force
Nelda Reid, Chair

WHEREAS Jesus called his disciples and followers to “strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness,” and we, as disciples, are called to embody a new order of love and justice; and

WHEREAS raids on undocumented immigrants in the United States and indefinite detention represent governmental failure in addressing complex national and international economic and political dynamics, which close legal avenues and force immigrants into the shadows, where they are subject to exploitation and virtual servitude; and

WHEREAS indefinite detention, and deportation tear families apart and create anguish, economic hardship and terror that is contrary to the Kingdom that Jesus describes; and

WHEREAS, in a new 2008 General Conference Resolution, The United Methodist Church affirms that “regardless of legal status or nationality, we are all connected through Christ to one another...The solidarity we share through Christ eliminates the boundaries and barriers which exclude and isolate. Therefore, the sojourners we are called to love are our brothers and sisters, our mothers and fathers, our sons and daughters; indeed, they are us.” [Welcoming the Migrant to the US]

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the North Texas Annual Conference (1) pledges to create a task force to address immigration concerns within our jurisdiction and develop plans for emergency responses to ICE raids, which might include providing material aid, legal services, childcare, interpretation, and spiritual support, and taking part in vigils and public witness pointing toward justice and humane treatment of immigrants. (Such a task force may include conference representatives from units dealing with global ministries, church and & society, religion and race, and racial/ethnic caucuses, as well as organizations such as United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men and programs such as Justice for Our Neighbors.); (2) Investigate the locations of ICE detention centers within the conference boundaries and consider how to provide ministries, legal support, and other services that will serve the objectives of Christian hospitality and civil and human rights.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution will be sent within thirty days of the end of this conference to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and members of the Texas Legislature, both House and Senate, that we are in favor of legislation that will fund services at ICE Detention Centers.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that the North Texas Annual Conference (1) will engage in study of new General Conference resolutions on migration and immigration and other resources that explore the biblical and theological bases for the church's positions and responses on these pressing issues; (2) participate in connectional education and training on immigration and collaborate as occasion provides with the United Methodist Task Force on Immigration (an interagency and inter-organizational body mandated by the 2008 General Conference)

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that the North Texas Annual Conference urge all its congregations and their members to pray for the people whose lives are torn apart by ICE raids and detention, and will, as appropriate, provide denominational and ecumenical ministries to assist families affected by raids and detention.

June 6, 2008