

**Pastoral Letter Addressing the Plight of
Migrants, Immigrants, and Refugees in the U.S.**

**Epiphany 2025 - NC Cabinet Excerpts
from the Council of Bishops Letter**

***Jesus said, “When you welcome the stranger,
you welcome me....” Matthew 25:35***

At no time has the church in the US had a greater opportunity to welcome Jesus among us as he journeys with migrants, immigrants, and refugees than today. We, your bishops, are clear that the situation these beloved of God face threatens their humanity, livelihood, and basic human rights.

For decades, a broken immigration system in the U.S. has kept migrants, immigrants, and refugees in this country living in the shadows of society in a state of perpetual fear. They have come to the U.S. under forced circumstances fleeing extreme poverty, hunger, political and religious persecution, war, cartel and gang violence, and the severe impact of climate

change. Some are actively recruited by large U.S. companies who need their labor. Yet migrants, immigrants, and refugees help to sustain the U.S. economy, serve our families caring for our children and our elderly, cleaning our homes, landscaping our properties, building our roads and the houses we live in, and cultivating and picking the crops that feed our families. They are our neighbors, our friends, and members and pastors of our churches. Racist, xenophobic, nationalistic, and anti-migrant hate speech has become standard rhetoric. We are living in a dark time that more than ever calls us to be the light of Christ, people of faith who take our baptismal vow to “resist evil in all its forms,” with utmost seriousness.

As United Methodists, we have firmly declared through our Social Principles that we are called to actively welcome the migrant, immigrant, and refugee among us.

- Affirming the dignity, worth, and rights of migrants, immigrants, and refugees.

- Recognizing that displaced people are particularly vulnerable as their in-between status often provides them with few protections and benefits, leaving them open to exploitation, violence, and abuse.
- Urging one another to welcome migrants, refugees, and immigrants into our congregations, providing concrete support, to them including help with navigating restrictive and often lengthy immigration policies, and assistance with securing food, housing, education, employment and other kinds of support.
- Opposing all laws and policies that attempt to criminalize, dehumanize, or punish displaced individuals and families based on their status as migrants, immigrants, or refugees.
- Decrying attempts to detain displaced people and hold them in inhumane and unsanitary conditions.
- Challenging policies that call for the separation of families, especially parents and minor children.
- Opposing the existence of for-profit detention centers that are used for the purpose of

detaining migrants, immigrants, and refugees
including minor children.

*(Social Principles of The United Methodist Church, The Political
Community Basic Rights and Freedoms, Section G. Migrants,
Immigrants and Refugees)*

We, your bishops, call upon the people of The United
Methodist Church to pray for migrants, immigrants,
and refugees among us and to welcome them with
the fullness of Christian love, remembering that as
we welcome these, our brothers and sisters, we
welcome Jesus our Lord.

Bishop Connie Mitchell Shelton
Raleigh Episcopal Area
North Carolina Conference
The United Methodist Church

Bishop Tracy S. Malone
President - Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church

Please use the creed below in worship or be inspired
by it to write your own corporate prayer:

THE IMMIGRANTS CREED

by Jose Luis Casal

**I believe in Almighty God,
who guided the people in exile and in exodus,
the God of Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon,
the God of foreigners and immigrants.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, a displaced Galilean,
who was born away from his people and his home, who fled
his country with his parents when his life was in danger.
When he returned to his own country he suffered under the
oppression of Pontius Pilate, the servant of a foreign power. Jesus
was persecuted, beaten, tortured, and unjustly condemned to death.
But on the third day Jesus rose from the dead,
not as a scorned foreigner but to offer us citizenship in God's
kingdom.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the eternal immigrant from God's kingdom among us,
who speaks all languages, lives in all countries,
and reunites all races.**

**I believe that the Church is the secure home
for foreigners and for all believers.**

**I believe that the communion of saints begins
when we embrace all God's people in all their diversity.
I believe in forgiveness, which makes us all equal before God,
and in reconciliation, which heals our brokenness.**

**I believe that in the Resurrection
God will unite us as one people
in which all are distinct and all are alike at the same time.
I believe in life eternal, in which no one will be foreigner
but all will be citizens of the kingdom
where God reigns forever and ever. Amen.**

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