

Welcoming the Migrant in our Midst Resolution

Whereas, the state of Tennessee is made up of many migrants who have migrated to our state seeking safety, security and prosperity; and

Whereas, migrants and refugees sit in the pews and are behind the pulpits of Tennessee's United Methodist Churches, provide skillful labor that is essential to the growth of our cities, provide much of the agricultural labor for produce and other goods that sustain us, offer retail and hospitality services in each of our communities; and

Whereas, we know so well that we have benefitted by their leadership. They have added to our witness for Christ as we have all dedicated ourselves to the church's mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world; and

Whereas, the writer of Leviticus commands the love of the immigrant, who "shall be to you as the citizen among you." (Leviticus 19:33-34); and

Whereas, early in Jesus' life, he was a refugee to Africa fleeing persecution and violence in his homeland. (Matthew 2:13-15) and told us that nations would be judged on the basis of the way they fed the hungry, clothed the naked and cared for prisoners (Matthew 25:31-46); and

Whereas, careless rhetoric has ignited xenophobic and racist attitudes among some of our fellow citizens;

Therefore be it resolved that the Tennessee Conference of The United Methodist Church (TNUMC), as followers of Jesus, commit ourselves to work to eliminate racism and violence directed toward migrants and refugees from all parts of the world;

Be it further resolved that the TNUMC, as followers of Jesus, express our opposition to any immigration policy that excludes refugees solely on the basis of their religion or national origin;

Be it further resolved that we celebrate the work of the Hispanic Latino Ministries Committee of the TNUMC and the formation of a Migrant Task Force by the Conference to help provide guidance to churches seeking to be in ministry to migrants in Tennessee;

Be it further resolved that, to that end, the Conference encourages all churches to educate and equip its members to provide hospitality, protect and welcome to migrants and refugees in their communities (see the Resolution approved by General Conference "Welcoming the Migrant to the United States¹"); and to take further actions and advocacy for just policies through prayer and discernment;

Be it further resolved that the Conference calls upon each church to engage and educate its members by participating in events sponsored by our Conference's Task Forces and the General Board of Church and Society;

Be it further resolved that the Conference calls upon our political leaders and policymakers to assure our laws affirm the worth, dignity, inherent values and rights of migrants.

Date: March 30, 2017

Submitted by: Justice for Our Neighbors, Committee on Hispanic/Latino Ministries, Open Table Nashville, Inc., Beloved Community

¹ <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/welcoming-the-migrant-to-the-us>