

Evanston Sanctuary Community Resolution
St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Approved at Vestry Meeting
February 21, 2018

Resolution

Whereas, as people of faith and as faith communities, the Imago Dei, the belief that we are all created in the Divine Image, is the starting point for our commitment to and relationship with refugees, immigrants and others seeking a safe haven in our nation or our communities given that all equally bearing the image of the Creator, all are entitled to dignity, safety, protection and welcome and thus, geographical accidents of birth do not define our worth before God or one another;

Whereas, both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures claimed as authoritative for Christians contain compelling narratives of refugees forced to flee oppression and threat including the Exodus from oppression under Pharaoh's hand and the flight of Mary, Joseph and the infant Jesus to escape Herod's murderous intentions, and further, that these acts of deliverance are lifted up as extensions of divine protection and love;

Whereas, sanctuary, in the varied ways that term has been defined, is a practice of solidarity deeply rooted in our various theological traditions:

the Torah contains more than thirty admonitions to welcome "strangers" or the vulnerable as a part of living out faith and the instruction not to harm "foreigners" who seek refuge is repeated again and again in the Hebrew scriptures (Exodus 22:21, Leviticus 19:33, Deuteronomy 10:19);

likewise, the Qur'an lifts up care for and welcome to the stranger or "wayfarer" as righteous. (Al-Baqarah 2:177, An-Nissa'4:36, At-Tawbah 9:60);

similarly, the teachings of Jesus and the early church attested to in the New Testament frequently lift up hospitality to strangers, even to enemies, as central to the Way, the new way of Jesus' proclaims for his disciples, exemplified in Jesus use of a parable to remind us how we are to respond to need: "For I was a hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me." (Matthew 25:35); thus, solidarity with immigrants and refugees is not simply the right thing to do, but a holy and righteous undertaking in obedience to God;

Whereas, our nation was founded by peoples of diverse faiths and backgrounds - many fleeing persecution, some brought forcibly as slaves;

Whereas, beginning on July 1, 1968, and continuing to the present, our nation has adopted severe numerical and other restrictions on legal immigration from the Western Hemisphere, including Mexico and Central America, while simultaneously embracing policies that encourage the immigration and employment of undocumented immigrants;

Whereas, on September 30, 1996, the U.S. Congress enacted the Illegal Immigration and Immigrant Responsibility Act ("IIRIRA"), which made it impossible for many U.S. citizens and lawful permanent

resident to obtain legal immigration status for their undocumented spouses, children, parents, and siblings;

Whereas, millions of people subject to oppression, persecution and violence have been forced to flee their countries in search of safety and freedom in the United States;

Whereas, the U.S. Congress has failed to enact comprehensive immigration reform to provide legal status and a pathway to U.S. citizenship to undocumented;

Whereas, President Trump has declared his intention to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (“DACA”) program which President Obama in June 2012 to secure the rights of immigrants brought to the United States as children pending the enactment by the U.S. Congress of comprehensive immigration reform, placing approximately 800,000 DACA recipients at risk of deportation;

Whereas, a lawsuit filed by the State of Texas and a number of other states prevented President Obama from implementing his November 2014 Executive Orders expanding DACA to protect additional immigrants who came to the United States as children and implementing Deferred Action for Parental Accountability (“DAPA”), a new program which would have protected from deportation millions of parents of U.S. citizen and lawful permanent residents;

Whereas, since his inauguration, President Trump has implemented a change in our nation’s immigration enforcement policies that is greatly increasing the number of deportations, threatening the stability of millions of families with undocumented family members at risk of deportation, and causing severe hardships and misery to millions of American citizens, lawful permanent residents and the undocumented members of their families;

Whereas, border security can be achieved without breaking up millions of families with undocumented members;

Whereas, many families in Evanston and surrounding communities have undocumented family members who are under threat of deportation and are experiencing the reality or possibility of family separation or the departure of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents to live abroad with their undocumented family members and the resultant hardships;

Whereas, the Sanctuary Movement began in the 1980s as a religious and political response to the deportation and asylum denials of hundreds of thousands of Central American refugees fleeing persecution, violence, and civil unrest;

Whereas, the Sanctuary Movement has been revitalized in recent years to encourage religious and other communal institutions to provide protection to undocumented immigrants and their families;

Whereas, numerous cities, including Evanston, and other local governments have enacted sanctuary resolutions, and our state has enacted the Illinois Trust Act, in order to protect undocumented

immigrants and their families and restrict the involvement of local and state law enforcement authorities in immigration law enforcement;

Whereas, in addition to protecting undocumented immigrants and their families, **St. Mark's Episcopal Church** remains committed to protecting other vulnerable populations who are particularly at risk of prejudice, discrimination and violence, including African Americans, Muslim Americans, LGBTQ Americans, Native Americans, and women.

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED, that **St. Mark's Episcopal Church** declares itself an Evanston Sanctuary Community.

LET IT BE RESOLVED that through this declaration, **St. Mark's Episcopal Church** commits itself to take actions consistent with the values and resources of our community to oppose xenophobia and to protect undocumented immigrants from deportation and the hardships such deportation will cause them and their families.

LET IT BE RESOLVED that **St. Mark's Episcopal Church** will participate in the Evanston4All community organizing efforts.

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED that **St. Mark's Episcopal Church** will create its own strategy for engaging in Sanctuary work that best fits the skills and strengths of our community. We also commit to work in partnership with all communities that sign this declaration;

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, in committing our community to protect the undocumented immigrants and their families, we will not overlook the needs of other vulnerable populations facing prejudice, discrimination, and violence, and will seek to unite the struggles of undocumented immigrants with the struggles of other vulnerable populations in our country.

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED, that **St. Mark's Episcopal Church** will offer forums or workshops about the injustice of our nation's immigration laws, the need to protect undocumented immigrants from deportation, and the hardships deportation will cause them and their families.

Resources

- [ACLU legal toolkit](#)
- [Chicago's History as a Sanctuary City](#)
- [Black People Need Sanctuary Cities Too](#)
- [Trump's Immigration Policies Explained](#)
- [The Sanctuary Movement: How Religious Groups are Sheltering the Undocumented](#)
- [What You Need to Know about DACA](#)
- [Union for Reform Judaism Sanctuary Resolution – 2017](#)
- [Memo on Tax Exempt Status for Religious Institutions Providing Refuge for the Undocumented](#)
- [Webinar: Sanctuary in the Era of Trump](#)
- [Interfaith Immigration Coalition Toolkit- includes toolkits for Rapid Response, Vigils, Town Hall Meetings and more](#)
- [Interfaith Sanctuary Toolkit](#)