

Resolution 3 – 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly Resolution Calling to Provide Sanctuary to Immigrants

WHEREAS, Jesus said we would see him in the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the prisoner; and

WHEREAS, we are living in times when immigrants from the Central and South Americas, regions of Africa and Asia, and the Middle East are fleeing warfare and devastating poverty, and are being persecuted; and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran Church over the last 75 years has been a leader in refugee resettlement through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, Lutheran Community (Family) Service and thousands of congregations; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Social Statement from 1998 proclaims, “We draw on the best of our nation’s traditions as a refuge and haven for the persecuted and destitute when we affirm that we support a generous policy of welcome for refugees and immigrants, and that we will advocate for just immigration policies including fairness in visa regulations and in admitting and protecting refugees”; and

WHEREAS, the declaration of Sanctuary is an ancient custom of the church, going back to the Hebrew people, which calls for the church to be a safe place for those escaping persecution; and

WHEREAS, it is the fifth charge of every ELCA pastor to “speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God’s love for the world”; and

WHEREAS, in Matthew 25:35, Jesus said, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” and, in Hebrews 13:2, exclaims “In exercising hospitality to the stranger many testified that they received more than they gave as if they had welcomed angels without knowing it”; and

WHEREAS, Mary, Joseph, and Jesus were refugees fleeing to Egypt to avoid Herod’s violence; and

WHEREAS, there are already sanctuary congregations in the Greater Milwaukee Synod with more to emerge with the New National Sanctuary Movement Milwaukee Network has been active since 2007; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod encourages its congregations to become more familiar with the resources of the New Sanctuary Movement¹ and the ELCA’s AMMPARO² initiative and to consider supporting the movement to provide sanctuary for immigrants in one of the following ways:

1. Sanctuary congregations: providing physical sanctuary (housing, financial, and legal assistance) to undocumented immigrants requesting their help
2. Sanctuary-supporting congregations: providing financial and other material support to sanctuary congregations
3. Welcoming congregations: making a public declaration of welcome to all immigrants and refugees, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod bishop continue speaking out in support of immigrants and refugees, boldly speaking the truth of the biblical commands of welcome and radical hospitality.

Submitted by Clusters 1 & 2, Milwaukee

¹ <http://newsanctuarymke.org/en/resources/>

² <http://www.elca.org/Resources/AMMPARO>

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*And by All Peoples Lutheran Church, Ascension Lutheran Church, Hephatha Lutheran Church,
Lake Park Lutheran Church, The Table Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community,
and Village Church; all of Milwaukee*

Rev. Ron Ballew

Rev. Lisa Bates-Froiland, Redeemer

Rev. Donna Brown, Village

Rev. David Dragseth, Lake Park

Rev. Joe Ellwanger

Rev. Jon Jacobs, Ascension

Rev. Steve Jerbi, All Peoples

Rev. Mary Martha Kannass, Hephatha

Rev. Pat Keen, Our Saviors

Jerry Key, Peace

Rev. Marilyn Miller, Reformation

Rev. Jessica Short, Marquette Campus Ministry

Rev. Jay Thorson, Capitol Drive

Rev. Michelle Townsend de Lopez, Cross

Rev. Alexis Twito, Lake Park

Venice Williams, The Table

Rev. Rachel Young Binter, UWM Campus Ministry