

Resolution: COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

- WHEREAS, scripture teaches: "The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." (Leviticus 19:34), and
- WHEREAS, Moses, Joseph, Ruth, Amos, the Holy Family, St. Paul and likely most of the first disciples lived some portion of their life as immigrants and refugees, and
- WHEREAS, the Government of the United States offers only 5,000 visas per year for low-skilled workers, and lawful permanent residents and U.S. Citizens face waits of years or decades to reunite with relatives, and
- WHEREAS, in recent years people in valid immigration status and even United States citizens have been subject to verbal and physical abuse, wrongfully targeted in community and workplace raids by immigration officials, been detained and separated from family, and in some cases wrongfully deported, and
- WHEREAS, the 2014 Frontline/Univision documentary "Rape in the Fields" reveals the vulnerability of women farmworkers, especially those who are undocumented, to sexual assault and abuse, and
- WHEREAS, at a 2014 meeting of the California Board of Food and Agriculture, it was noted that 2% of California farmworkers are native born U.S. citizens, and
- WHEREAS, the "Message on Immigration" of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) calls this church to "examine anew" our attitudes towards immigrant people and "to advocate for immigration, refugee, and asylum laws that are fair and generous.", and
- WHEREAS, the U.S. Senate passed a bipartisan Immigration Reform Bill (S744) in June 2014 that included an earned pathway to citizenship, family unity and good provisions on refugee rights and resettlement, but the Bill has stalled in the U.S. House of Representatives which has yet to take up immigration reform legislation, and

- WHEREAS, the 2013 Churchwide Assembly adopted an Immigration Reform Memorial (with more than 95% voting yes) based on the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) five core immigration reform principles; therefore be it
- RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod call on Rostered Leaders who preach and teach in response to the Gospel to promote an understanding of immigration issues that addresses welcome, encourage concern for the vulnerable, and calls believers to foster the highest possible level of moral discourse in church and society; and be it further
- RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod encourage congregations to engage in prayerful, reasoned discussion and education on issues related to immigration and refugee resettlement, availing themselves of resources prepared by the ELCA, and by LIRS; and be it further
- RESOLVED, that all members of the Southwest California Synod be encouraged to advocate for the adoption of comprehensive immigration reform legislation consistent with principles articulated in the ELCA "Message on Immigration" where said legislation should prioritize the reunification of families, provide a reasonable path to citizenship for undocumented individuals currently living and working in the U.S., treat all individuals with justice and humanity in the enforcement of immigration laws, and establish an immigration system for future immigrants that does not discriminate against applicants with respect to race, national origin, color, resources or education; and be it further
- RESOLVED, that all members of the Southwest California Synod be encouraged to communicate with President Barack Obama, U.S. Senators Boxer and Feinstein, their member of the U.S. House of Representatives, and House Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy (R- Bakersfield), to develop and pass such comprehensive immigration reform legislation in the current session.

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