

# Immigration

*I was a stranger and you welcomed me.*

*Matthew 25:35*



## Ministries of Welcome: Ideas for Action / Resource List

(Last update 2009)

The 217<sup>th</sup> General Assembly passed a resolution (which originated in the Presbytery of New York City) challenging each Presbyterian congregation and presbytery to embrace a comprehensive approach to “advocacy and welcome” for immigrants.

### Action

**Organize a committee in your church as a vehicle for sharing information and resources, collective action, brainstorming, etc.**

**Educate your congregation/community about immigration issues.**

- If there are immigrants in your congregation/community: consider hiring a lawyer to speak about paths to citizenship/documentation – and to answer basic questions.
- Ask immigrants to tell their stories to educate your congregation/community.
- Provide other opportunities for learning about the debate and the PCUSA’s positions.

**Support passage of comprehensive immigration reform legislation (see next page).**

**Maintain and make available a list of resources and services available to immigrants – published in multiple languages if necessary (see below for information).**

**Hold a health fair with special outreach to immigrants.**

**Ask multiple-language speakers in your congregation to volunteer to translate documents, provide interpretation, etc.**

**Offer to attend hearings with documented or undocumented immigrants; and to provide accompaniment in other situations in which immigrants can feel vulnerable.**

**Ask questions:**

What will make immigrants feel safe and welcome in your church?

What kinds of support, friendship, etc. will make a difference to them?

**Immigration Working Group, *The Council for Witness in Society and the World*  
Presbytery of New York City**

**New York State  
Interfaith Network for  
Immigration Reform**  
*(Network Membership in Formation)*

*American Jewish Committee, Long Island,  
New York City, Westchester Offices*

*Cabrini Immigrant Services*

*Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of New York*

*Catholic Charities, Diocese of Brooklyn and  
Queens*

*Churches United to Save and Heal*

*Council of Churches of the City of New York*

*Council of Peoples Organizations*

*Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition*

*Hindu Temple Society of North America,  
Flushing, New York*

*Interfaith Alliance of Rochester*

*Interfaith Center of New York*

*Judson Memorial Church*

*Latino Leadership Circle*

*Latino Pastoral Action Center*

*Mosque of Islamic Brotherhood*

*Muslim Consultative Network*

*New York Faith & Justice*

*New York State Council of Churches*

*New York New Sanctuary Coalition*

*New York Theological Seminary*

*Presbytery of New York City*

*Reformed Church in America*

*Riverside Church*

*Rockland Jews for Justice*

*Rural & Migrant Ministry*

*The Sikh Coalition*

*UJA Federation of New York*

*United Methodist Church, NY Conference*

*Union Theological Seminary, NYC*

*\*In partnership with*

*The New York Immigration Coalition*

*The Hudson Valley Community  
Coalition*

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The New York State Interfaith Network is a network of individuals and organizations representing/connected to diverse faith communities in New York State that has formed for the purpose of advocating for passage of just and humane immigration reform as soon as possible.

Network members believe that just and humane immigration reform, as delineated in the National Interfaith Immigration Coalition's *Interfaith Platform on Humane Immigration Reform* (summarized below), is required by the values of our faith communities and our nation, and meets our nation's security, economic, and political needs.

The Network affirms that just and humane immigration reform includes fair and humane treatment for all immigrants to our country, including refugees and asylum seekers.

**National Interfaith Platform on  
Humane Immigration Reform  
Summary**

*The Hebrew Bible* tells us: "The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 19:33-34). In *The New Testament*, Jesus tells us to welcome the stranger, for "what you do to the least of my brethren, you do unto me" (Matthew 25:40). *The Qur'an* tells us that we should "do good to...those in need, neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer that you meet" (4:36). The Hindu *Taittiriya Upanishad* tells us: "The guest is a representative of God" (1.11.2).

Therefore, we call on the new Administration and 111th Congress to commit to:

Uphold family unity as a priority of all immigration policies

Create a process for undocumented immigrants to earn their legal status and eventual citizenship

Protect workers and provide efficient channels of entry for new migrant workers

Facilitate immigrant integration

Restore due process protections and reform detention policies

Align the enforcement of immigration laws with humanitarian values

Recognize immigration as a matter of human rights

***This platform has been signed onto by over 50 national faith organizations, and by hundreds of faith leaders – the list grows daily.***

**Contacts**

Annie Rawlings, Presbytery of NYC [socialwitness@presbynyc.org](mailto:socialwitness@presbynyc.org)

Dr. Diane Steinman, American Jewish Committee, NY Office [steinmand@ajc.org](mailto:steinmand@ajc.org)

**Immigration Working Group, *The Council for Witness in Society and the World*  
Presbytery of New York City**

## **Sojourners Ministry with Detained Immigrants at the Elizabeth Detention Facility**

A ministry with those detained in, or released from, the Elizabeth Detention Facility in Elizabeth, NJ. The facility holds around 300 non-criminal non-citizens, both men and women. Many of these individuals are asylum seekers. Volunteers are needed to:

- ~ Visit individuals detained in the facility for one-on-one conversation (training and mentoring is provided to volunteers)
- ~ Write to individuals detained in the facility.
- ~ Assist individuals when they are released from detention in the facility.

For more information contact: Carol Fouke-Mpoyo [cjfm10@hotmail.com](mailto:cjfm10@hotmail.com)  
David Fraccaro [davidfraccaro@yahoo.com](mailto:davidfraccaro@yahoo.com)

## **New York New Sanctuary Movement**

The New Sanctuary Movement (NSM) is a national coalition of interfaith religious leaders and participating faith communities, called by faith to respond actively and publicly to the suffering of our immigrant brothers and sisters residing in the United States. Its purpose is to assist immigrants facing deportation to stay in the country through legal means, while bringing their stories to the attention of a wider audience. Twenty-eight faith communities and organizations in New York City are members.

Three congregations in the Presbytery of New York City have joined the New Sanctuary Movement: First Presbyterian Church Manhattan, Jan Hus Presbyterian Church, and Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church.

For more information contact: Rachel Soltis: [lovehasnoborders@gmail.com](mailto:lovehasnoborders@gmail.com)

## **Resources**

**The PCUSA Immigration Office:** a helpful resource for information, and for strategies by which congregations can support members who are immigrants, including those who are undocumented. [www.pcusa.org/immigration](http://www.pcusa.org/immigration) The web site includes, in part:

- ~ **A summary of Presbyterian Policy on Immigration**
- ~ **Liturgical resources**
- ~ **Summaries of key immigration issues**
- ~ **Summaries of immigration-related legislation**
- ~ **A Family Care Plan** church leaders can use if a church member is detained by law enforcement
- ~ **Know Your Rights** information for immigrants

**Presbyterians for Just Immigration List Serve:** A national conversation/information-sharing forum for the PCUSA established by the PCUSA Immigration Office.

Send an email to Dana Dages [ddages@ctr.pcusa.org] and ask to join – make sure to identify yourself as a Presbyterian as it is a Presbyterians-only network.

**Immigration Working Group, *The Council for Witness in Society and the World*  
Presbytery of New York City**

**New York Immigration Hotline:** 800-566-7637 212-419-3737

This is a multi-lingual information and referral service. Calls are anonymous and confidential. It is operated by Catholic Charities.

### **Justice For Our Neighbors Legal Clinics**

JFON offers free/low cost, church-based, immigration legal services (CWSW helps fund).

*To schedule an appointment at one of the NYC clinics, or to volunteer, call:*

*Flushing:* 917-609-9879 *Bedford-Stuyvesant:* 718-783-5761 *Chinatown:* 212-267-6464  
*Yonkers:* 914-963-1155

**Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs:** [www.nyc.gov/immigrants](http://www.nyc.gov/immigrants)

Has a lot of information about services and resources available to immigrants, including an online directory of services listing more than 250 community-based organizations that offer free or low-cost services to immigrants.

**New York Immigration Coalition:** [www.thenyic.org](http://www.thenyic.org)

The New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) is an umbrella policy and advocacy organization for more than 200 groups in New York State that work with immigrants and refugees. The Presbytery of New York City is a member organization. The web site's home page provides access to information about a wide range of issues related to immigration, and to a training schedule on specific topics for organizations, social service providers, and attorneys who serve immigrant communities

## **Two Basic Information/Discussion Resources**

### ***Myths and Facts About the Costs of Immigration in the USA – powerpoint***

Prepared by Mark Sills, Executive Director of Faith Action International House in Greensboro, NC. May be used freely by religious organizations as long as the author is credited.

**Contact Annie Rawlings, staff, for a copy** (it is not currently available by download from the web).

### ***Night of 1,000 Conversations Toolkit***

A toolkit for leading discussion about the treatment of immigrants by the Department of Homeland Security, and for developing strategies to advocate for their civil liberties and human rights – particularly in relation to practices of arrest, detention and deportation. **May be used in association with a “Night” designated for conversations around the country to take place at the same time, or at any time your congregation is ready and interested.**

<http://www.nightof1000conversations.org/toolkit/>

## **Links**

**American Immigration Lawyers Association**

[www.aila.org](http://www.aila.org)

**Immigration Working Group, *The Council for Witness in Society and the World*  
Presbytery of New York City**

**BorderLinks**

[www.borderlinks.org](http://www.borderlinks.org)

**Detention Watch Network**

[www.detentionwatchnetwork.org](http://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org)

**Humane Borders**

[www.humaneborders.org](http://www.humaneborders.org)

**Immigration Policy Center**

[www.immigrationpolicy.org](http://www.immigrationpolicy.org)

**Interfaith Immigration Coalition**

[www.interfaithimmigration.org](http://www.interfaithimmigration.org)

**Justice For Immigrants**

[www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org)

**Migration Policy Institute**

[www.migrationpolicy.org/research/usimmigration](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/usimmigration)

**National Council of La Raza**

[www.nclr.org](http://www.nclr.org)

**National Immigration Forum**

[www.immigrationforum.org](http://www.immigrationforum.org)

**National Immigration Law Center**

[www.nilc.org](http://www.nilc.org)

**No More Deaths**

[www.nomoredeaths.org](http://www.nomoredeaths.org)

## **Abbreviated Bibliography**

American Gulag: Inside U.S. Immigration Prisons

Mark Dow, University of California Press, 2005.

Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible

M. Daniel Carroll R., Baker Academic, 2008

Detained: Immigration Laws and the Expanding I.N.S. Jail Complex

Michael Welch, Temple University Press, 2002.

The Devil's Highway: A True Story

Luis Alberto Urrea, Little, Brown and Co., 2004.

Making Room: Recovering Hospitality As a Christian Tradition

Christine D. Pohl, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999.

New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission

John Koenig, Wipf and Stock Publisher, 1985.

Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the 'Illegal Alien' and the Remaking of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary Joseph Nevins, Routledge, 2001.

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## **Guide to Public Benefits for Immigrants**

Prepared by the Office of the Public Advocate, New York City, and the New York Immigration Coalition

### **Available on-line in:**

English

Spanish

Chinese

Korean

Russian

Bengali (special fonts needed for Bengali)

<http://www.pubadvocate.nyc.gov/PublicBenefitsGuide.htm>

This free guide provides valuable information on federal, state and city benefits and is the first of its kind to specifically examine immigration status as part of benefit eligibility.

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# Council for Witness in Society and the World

## Working Group on Immigration

### Statement of Purpose

*Adopted Fall, 2006*

The Presbytery of New York City *Working Group on Immigration* exists to organize activities and to carry out the mandates outlined in the 2004 and 2006 resolutions on immigration of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the USA (PCUSA). We seek guidance from the Holy Spirit to serve God and our neighbors by:

- naming and confronting the powers and principalities that stand behind unjust immigration policies and practices;
- mobilizing the church in prayer, lamentation, repentance, and other forms of spiritual discipline to stand against the policies that ensnare our nation and enslave our immigrant neighbors;
- advocating for the enactment of just immigration laws that have at their heart the prophetic command heard by Micah to "do justice and love mercy and walk humbly with your God;"
- creating a model for immigration advocacy that can be used by other presbyteries;
- strengthening the bonds that unite the Church Universal by seeking out common ground with sister churches and linking our church's name and our efforts with those of our brother and sister Christians;
- encouraging ecumenical and interfaith advocacy for a just, merciful and humble national immigration policy; and
- building capacity for and supporting congregation-based service.

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For more information, or if you are a Presbyterian and are interested in becoming a member of the Working Group, contact Annie Rawlings, M.Div. – Interim Associate Executive Presbyter for Social Witness 212/870-2221, ext. 4249 [socialwitness@presbynyc.org](mailto:socialwitness@presbynyc.org)

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