



Faith that Calls for Welcome Confronts the Harshest Anti-Immigrant Policies in Modern U.S. History

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“In the name of our God, I ask you to have mercy upon the people in our country who are scared now.” Those were the words of The Right Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde, Bishop of the Diocese of Washington at a prayer service in Washington DC, as she asked President Trump to show compassion towards the LGBTQ+ community and to immigrants who are fearing the repercussions of the inhumane policies already being laid out.

The next Trump administration has put together even more harsh and dehumanizing anti-immigrant policies than the last, much of which will not stand as constitutional. The Executive Order to end birthright citizenship is in complete disregard to the 14th amendment. It is especially chilling to see a Department of Homeland Security spokesperson suggest immigration enforcement should have the right to apprehend people in houses of worship, disregarding our sacred calling to welcome and love our neighbors within our temples and churches. Additionally, the attempt to end refugee and asylum programs for those facing political persecution signifies the lack of democratic values many faith leaders fought for in our historic advocacy to pass the 1980 Refugee Act.

Still, congregations like the Good Shepherd UCC at the U.S.- Mexico Border whose pastor, Rev. Randy Mayer, is a co-founder of the Samaritans, a humanitarian aid group that aids migrants in the desert hosted the [Common Ground at the Border](#) event last week including a press conference. “Regardless of who lives in the White House, the humanitarian movement will continue to be a life-saving presence in the deadly desert. In fact, we are already

seeing a surge in our volunteer Corp, ready to put out water in the desert, provide food, clothing and first aid. We are people who want to make a difference, people who want to do the right thing and what we do saves lives, what we do matters,” Rev. Mayer said.

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition put out the following [press release](#) and many congregations are recommitting to do the important work of Sanctuary (see [Sanctuary Pledge to Sign Up](#)), even in the midst of the confusion many feel about the rescission of the “Sensitive Locations” policy that immigration enforcement has had since 2011 to avoid actions at houses of worship, schools, hospitals and public demonstrations. Now immigrant communities may face a chilling effect, becoming fearful of possible apprehension as they attend worship, go to a congregation to receive services, seek medical care, to take their kids to school or share their stories at public events or rallies (See FAQ for Congregations).

Top faith leaders throughout the country are working together to continue the prophetic witness work through press conferences, actions, rallies and continuing the ministry of accompaniment and welcome regardless of someone’s immigration status. Bishop Budde lifted up the importance of compassion to the LGBTQ+ and immigrant communities being targeted by the Trump administration. As the United Church of Christ, we will continue to work with ecumenical and interfaith partners to collaborate to speak truth to power and find common ground in solidarity with marginalized communities.

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The Rev. Noel Andersen serves as the Minister for Immigration Justice for the Education for Faithful Action Ministries (EFAM) in the National Setting of the United Church of Christ.

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