

## **Position Statement of Calvin Church Council**

The Calvin Church Council believes that authority is derived from God and is to be exercised for the common good (Rom 13:4). And that God instructs us to show hospitality to the stranger in our midst (Lev 19:33-34). Therefore, while acknowledging the government's right and responsibility to regulate national borders and manage immigration, we hold that this responsibility must be carried out while respecting human dignity, transparency, and legal protections.

The Calvin Church Council believes that all persons are beloved by God, created in his image and endowed with inherent dignity (Gen 1:26-27). Therefore, we call for fair and just immigration policies that acknowledge the dignity and value of all people. We oppose the use of language that vilifies immigrants, intimidation, indiscriminate immigration enforcement, inhumane detention, and delayed or denied legal process.

The Calvin Church Council holds that Christ speaks to us in our times when he says, "What you have done for the least of these you have done unto me" (Matt 25: 40-45). Therefore, we call congregation members to personally and publicly commit to taking action to make our community and nation better places for immigrants to live.

## **Operating Policy on Immigration**

As a church in the Reformed tradition, Calvin Church believes that all people are created in the image of God and that Scripture directs us to be welcoming towards strangers in our midst and to extend special care to those most vulnerable to social or economic conditions that threaten their ability to survive. Calvin Church believes we are meant to live in community and that God calls us to welcome and support immigrants and refugees. The church encourages members to show this compassion through both group and individual actions, including, but not limited to those listed below.

### **Providing a Safe Place of Worship**

We affirm the need to reach out in hospitality and compassion to immigrant peoples and refugees and commit to being a safe and welcoming space for everyone, and to upholding the rights of all to worship freely and participate in church activities without fear.

Should our house of worship be approached for entry by any kind of immigration enforcement agents, we pledge to follow legal procedures which include the following:

1. Seeing a valid judicial (not administrative – such as I-200 or I-205) warrant;
2. Having agents be unmasked and showing their actual names and valid badge numbers;
3. Giving a clear and respectful explanation of why they want to enter the building.

### **Promoting Education on Issues of Immigration**

1. We encourage all members to study immigration issues to better understand the history, motivations, and circumstances of individuals migrating.

2. We commend our church staff and committees to provide opportunities through presentations and reading recommendations in order to promote member learning.

### **Encouraging Advocacy**

1. We encourage advocacy for persons detained or incarcerated because of their lack of legal status and for humane treatment of such people and support for their families.
2. We encourage advocacy for comprehensive immigration reform that seeks the well-being and flourishing of people without legal status and provides clear and accessible pathways to gain legal status.
3. We encourage connecting members with opportunities to advocate for just policies and support immigrants at risk of detention and during and following detention.
4. We encourage members to participate in the work of organizations that provide needed material, monetary, mental and legal support to immigrant families.