

Immigration

Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.
— 1 John 4:20-21

Of the people living in the United States today, 35.7 million were born elsewhere. Twelve million live without documents. Of the total, 1.6 million are children, half of whom live below the poverty line. This movement of people can be seen in every continent of the world. Global migration was estimated at 191 million in 2006.

Global migration has increased dramatically in recent years due to economic policies like free trade that have eliminated jobs and pushed farmers from their land in poor nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America and pulled them into the more prosperous nations of North America, Europe and Asia. Competition for resources and displacement due to climate change in poor nations has also contributed to these patterns.

In the United States, communities are being transformed. Many U.S. citizens express fears related to race, jobs and security, which has led to an anti-immigrant backlash and migrants—especially women migrants and their children—being endangered by the rash of state anti-immigrant legislation. The use of local police for immigration enforcement, growing criminalization of immigrants who have committed no crime and rising detentions and deportations have all contributed to family separation.

Our Vision

We affirm a world in which God's vision of beloved community, a world in which nationalities and borders do not divide us as the people who God loves. We affirm the human rights of every person regardless of status and affirm that these rights do not stop at borders.

United Methodist Church Policy

"To refuse to welcome migrants to this country—and to stand by in silence while families are separated, individual freedoms are ignored, and the migrant community in the United States is demonized by members of Congress and the media—is complicity to sin" (Resolution 3281, "Welcoming the Migrant to the U.S.," *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church 2012*).

"Ways must be found to share more equitably the resources of the world" (§163E United Methodist Social Principles). "The current global economic system reflects an expectation that many people will live in poverty, or have their nations torn by conflict, so that others may live in abundance. That many people will resist poverty and war through migration is an ancient and modern fact of human



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existence ... The United Methodist Church commits to engage in strong, coordinated advocacy on migration issues and on behalf of actions that overcome poverty, war and other causes leading to the displacement and marginalization of people” (Resolution 6028, “Global Migration and the Quest for Justice,” *The Book of Resolutions*).

What United Methodist Women Members Can Do

- Read the 2012 spiritual growth study *Immigration and the Bible* by Joan M. Maruskin in your group. To order, see www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/immigrationstudy.
- Use the resource “Tools for Leaders: Hope and Hospitality.” It includes worship, hymns, prayers, workshops, sermons, issue discussions and ways to take action. Go to: www.umwmissionresources.org/pdfs/hopeandhospitality.pdf.
- Start a United Methodist Women immigration team in your conference, district or group. See “How To Create a Conference United Methodist Women Immigration Team,” www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/immigration.
- Find out how United Methodist Women members across the country are engaged in service and action to welcome migrants and impact immigration policy at the local, state and national level. See a review of United Methodist Women conference action in “Because We Believe: United Methodist Women Take Action for Immigrant and Civil Rights, 2006-2012,” www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/immigration.
- Set up a detention center visitation program through your church or ecumenical group. You can work with a national Detention Visitation Program of Detention Watch Network for coaching and support. See “How to Visit Migrants in Detention in Your Community,” www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/immigration.
- Celebrate December 18, International Migrants Day by calling on the United States to ratify the migrant rights treaty.
- Sign up for e-mail alerts to take action for immigrant rights by contacting Carol Barton, cbarton@unitedmethodistwomen.org.

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