



## Become An Immigrant Welcoming Congregation

The 2017 General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) unanimously passed GA-1723, a “Sense of the Assembly” resolution titled “On Becoming Immigrant Welcoming Communities.” Find it at: <https://ga.disciples.org/resolutions/2017/ga-1723/>. GA-1723:

- ◇ Recognized our biblical calling—repeated frequently throughout our sacred texts-- to welcome the stranger, for **“just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40)**
- ◇ Recalled our CC(DOC) heritage founded in part by immigrant ministers such as Thomas & Alexander Campbell
- ◇ Affirmed the growth and contributions of immigrants in our communities throughout the U.S. & Canada
- ◇ Noted the prevalence of Disciples immigrant members and congregations from Hispanic/LatinX, Haitian, Liberian, Korean, and many other backgrounds
- ◇ Highlighted extreme fears and growing anxieties faced by immigrants and their often mixed-status families in our congregations and communities; due to experienced trauma, growing family separations, and immigration policies needing reform

### Now, How Can Your Congregation Become An Immigrant Welcoming Congregation?

Sign up [HERE](http://bit.ly/IWCInterest) at: <http://bit.ly/IWCInterest> for **YOUR Congregation To Begin Your Process!**



#### 5 Steps:



1. Planning a Covenant
2. Prayerful Preparations
3. Partnerships for Understanding
4. Public Presence for Transformation
5. Preventions and Protection

#### Step 1: Planning a Covenant

- ◇ Gather a core group of conversation partners in your congregation to begin envisioning your interests in learning and relationship building. Assess your current relationships and concerns. Complete the IWC Interest form online (above) if you have not yet.
- ◇ Draft your covenant, including your plans for Steps 2 through 5. For each step, plan one or more learning or action events, and time for reflection, and planning/updating your covenant if needed.

#### Step 2: Prayerful Preparations

- ◇ Engage in prayer about each covenant step, and think how you will reflect on and evaluate each one.
- ◇ Prepare your Spirits for your welcoming journey by joining in Bible Study about migrant concerns and characters in the Bible. Some suggested resources can be found here: <http://bit.ly/RIMWorshipResources>.
- ◇ Gather your questions about local, national, and global immigration & refugee topics. Study to gain further insights for understanding and future faithful actions.





### Step 3: Partnerships for Understanding

- ◇ This step is really the heart of your welcoming journey! Strengthened by your biblical and issues study, seek to build incarnational relationships with immigrants in your congregation and community.
- ◇ REALLY LISTEN. Don't anticipate what is needed. Learn to receive and appreciate contributions of immigrants. As relationships of trust gradually develop, prepare to respond in ways requested by immigrant friends, and that match their values.



### Step 4: Public Presence for Transformation

- ◇ Seek out immigrant led organizations that work to promote solidarity and justice with immigrants. As you strengthen relationships, engage in actions of Disciples public presence. Be willing to be led into new experiences; and even if you are uncomfortable, remember the great discomfort and anxieties experienced constantly by so many immigrant and refugee community members.
- ◇ Create powerful vigils that communicate your faith values, and build models for action that demonstrate your partnerships in leadership.
- ◇ Dare to take prophetic roles that call out injustice and racism, and which seek to name and take accountability for injustices caused by the dominant culture.
- ◇ Constantly connect your faithful public actions with biblical understandings of justice and reconciliation. Share your journey in worship and on social media to inspire other congregations to welcome, too!

### Step 5: Prevention and Protection

- ◇ Consider offering accompaniment to persons attending ICE appointments, provide assistance to area asylum seekers, think about what type of safe spaces your facilities might be able to provide, help meet education goals, support mental health or legal needs, and perhaps offer sanctuary. Be guided through your relationships along your church's faithful immigrant welcoming journey!



To get started, contact: Valeria Bejar, Immigrant Response Specialist, [vbejar@cpohm.disciples.org](mailto:vbejar@cpohm.disciples.org), 520-350-3227; OR Rev. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Refugee & Immigration Ministries Director, [sstanley@dhm.disciples.org](mailto:sstanley@dhm.disciples.org), 202-957-7826. At every step along the way, seek out Disciples resources from Obra Hispana, NAPAD, Refugee & Immigration Ministries, Disciples Legal Immigration, NBA Mental Health Initiatives, and more!