



CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) in the United States and Canada

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Rev. Teresa "Terri" Hord Owens, General Minister and President

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Dear Disciples, and dear friends of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),

As members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) we recognize the Biblical mandate to welcome the stranger, the foreigner, and the alien. Leviticus 19 tells us not to mistreat the foreigner who resides among us, but instead to “love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt.” Jesus instructs us to care for the marginalized and oppressed among us, 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). As such, our faith compels us to speak out against the dangerous racist and anti-immigrant rhetoric shared earlier this week.

During the US Presidential Debate on Tuesday September 10, Former President Donald Trump amplified false rumors that Haitian immigrants in Ohio were abducting and eating their neighbors’ pets. These false claims echoed similar anti-immigrant comments made by his campaign, including his running mate, Ohio Senator JD Vance.

This kind of rhetoric is unacceptable. It is dangerous, dehumanizing, and puts already vulnerable communities even more at risk of threats and violence. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is blessed to count Haitian congregations among our membership, including the Haitian Disciples of Christ in Florida who share:

"The recent false accusations against our Haitian community, alleging that we eat cats and dogs, are not only deeply painful but also damaging to our reputation. These unfounded claims perpetuate harmful stereotypes and foster division and mistrust. Our community is built on respect, tradition, and shared values, and such misinformation undermines our dignity. It is crucial for us to address these misconceptions with honesty and compassion, promoting understanding and unity. By standing together and correcting these falsehoods, we reaffirm our commitment to truth and the values we hold dear."

Haitian asylum-seekers and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders are not only pursuing what is their legal right, they are also challenging us all to live in full alignment with our religious and spiritual values, which implore us to welcome all people and not to turn our back on those in need.

The former president’s rhetoric targeting Haitians is not just xenophobic– it is anti-Black. Mass migration from Haiti does not occur simply in response to natural disasters - it is closely tied to harmful, racist U.S. and Western foreign policies toward Haiti going back to 1804 when the country was founded by formerly enslaved people who fought for and won their freedom.

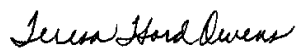
**We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for *wholeness*
in a *fragmented world*.**

**As part of the one body of Christ, we *welcome*
all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us.**

Portraying Black immigrants as dangerous fuels the same racist stereotypes that impact Black Americans and Black people across the diaspora. It is a deliberate tactic to spread hate, promote further polarization in our country, and maintain our broken immigration system.

We urge public figures, pastors, faith leaders and political leaders alike to use their platforms to uplift immigrant communities and foster an environment of care and respect, rather than perpetuating division with false narratives.

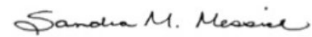
As a faith tradition, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada is committed to advocating for the dignity, rights, and humanity of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. We stand in solidarity with the Haitian community in Springfield, Ohio and across the United States and Canada. We continue to work and pray for humane and just immigration policies and programs.



Rev. Teresa "Terri" Hord Owens
General Minister and President



Rev. Allen Harris
Regional Minister in Ohio



Rev. Sandy Messick
Regional Minister in Florida

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