



THE AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF MASSACHUSETTS

Transforming Lives and Communities

*Go therefore and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost:
Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. Matthew 28:19-20a*

Rev. Dr. Mary Day Hamel, Executive Minister

Christopher McWhite, President

13 February 2025

Dear Friends,

Grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. This letter is going out to our immigrant churches and those who host them. I am deeply concerned for you all in these perilous times.

In recent weeks, TABCOM has sought to share resources for our churches dealing with this unprecedented era of uncertainty and anxiety. Until recently, churches have been seen as “protected spaces”; that is no longer the case, though there is still a lack of clarity about how immigration enforcement personnel will interpret this.

I am part of a nationwide group of ABC Executive Ministers who have been meeting to focus on immigration issues for our churches. I have also signed the attached letter of concern, which was initiated by the Massachusetts Council of Churches (MCC).

I want to take this opportunity to share a list of some of the best resources we have found:

American Baptist Home Mission Societies – our American Baptist family has a continuously updated page of links and resources here:

[ABHMS Resources for Immigrant Communities](#)

Massachusetts Council of Churches – some of you may have attended their recent training, here is the recording:

[Know Your Rights Training for Massachusetts Faith Leaders](#)

Massachusetts Baptist Multicultural Ministries – our friends at MBMM (a TABCOM partner organization) have a variety of resources for support and advocacy of our immigrant and refugee communities.

[MBMM Website](#)

Sojourners – this article from the progressive Christian organization Sojourners includes a number of helpful links:

[What to do if ICE comes to your church](#)

A few specific suggestions:

- Equip your members with resources about their rights, in their primary language. [Red Cards / Tarjetas Rojas from the Immigrant Legal Resource Center](#) are available in 25 languages and free to download.
- Encourage your members to copy, organize, and carry their documentation with them. They also need to have paperwork and a back-up plan for their children.
- If your church broadcasts your worship services and other events, we suggest that you **not share views of your congregation itself** but keep the camera on those who are presenting.
- Please check your church website, social media, etc. and **remove all personal information of church leaders**, etc. While we need contact info for our churches, it should be an office phone number, a general church email, etc. but NOT the pastor's personal address, phone, or email. There has been an increase in "doxxing" where personal information of leadership is being shared, resulting in harassment.

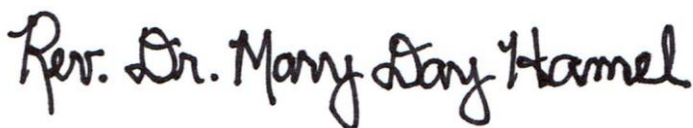
Some thoughts about **how to respond if ICE or other agents come to your church door.**

This is not an issue where there is broad consensus. Some churches are attempting to distinguish between "public" and "private" areas of their facilities. It is not clear that these distinctions will be respected. In theory, entering a "private area" of a church requires a warrant signed by a judge. In addition, you have the right to see identification from any official who comes to your church. There have been instances of individuals in "uniform" misrepresenting themselves. In all cases, safety comes first.

Finally, if your church experiences harassment of any kind, please contact us immediately. My cell phone is 978-732-9111. We are prepared to stand in solidarity with you during these perilous times.

I thank my God every time I remember you. In every prayer for all of you, I always pray with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:3-6)

Serving Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Dr. Mary Day Hamel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Dr. Mary Day Hamel, Executive Minister