

Protecting Our Congregations: An Update and an Urgent Request

In March, I shared [news about a lawsuit](#) our synod joined alongside several other synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and other plaintiffs. The lawsuit challenges the federal government's decision to rescind longstanding guidance limiting immigration enforcement at "sensitive locations," including houses of worship. We joined because immigration enforcement at our churches threatens our freedom to gather for worship, practice our faith, and minister to our neighbors.

As I explained in that article, a federal court issued a preliminary injunction restoring protections for the plaintiffs covered by the lawsuit, including our synod and our congregations. With limited exceptions, the order prohibits routine immigration enforcement at our houses of worship, including arrests, immigration enforcement interviews, and checkpoints targeting people entering or leaving. This was an important step in protecting our congregations while the lawsuit continues—not a final resolution of the case.

Since then, ICE has violated this order at at least two of our congregations. We need to know if there are others.

If you know of any actual or suspected violations at one of our congregations or related ministries, please contact me ASAP at sbriner@swtsynod.org or 830-379-9900. Please include when and where the incident occurred, what happened, and any documentation safely gathered. We will take these reports to the lawyers representing us in this case so they can assess and address them.

This is about our freedom to live out our faith and our calling to care for vulnerable neighbors. Thank you for helping us respond with clarity, courage, and compassion—and for helping our churches remain places of prayer, welcome, and refuge.

Bishop Sue