

Resolution NY-F

Originator: Vestry of the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd Buffalo, The Very Reverend Rebecca Barnes, The Reverend Shannon Collis, The Reverend Elizabeth Hadaway, The Reverend Michael Hadaway, The Reverend Joseph Kozlowski, The Reverend Robin Kozlowski, The Reverend Steve Lane, The Reverend Rosaleen Nogle, The Reverend Claudia Scheda, The Reverend Frieda Webb

Subject: Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

Resolved: The Diocese of Western New York shares the concerns of other Episcopalians, our siblings in other Christian communities, and many other people in regard to the current actions of the federal government around immigration. We deplore the current model of operations of "ICE" that seem more at home in a totalitarian state than a democracy. The dehumanization, especially by those who self-identify as Christian, of people from different lands is repugnant to the clear sense of Scripture.

Resolved: our congregations are encouraged to have the full text of Leviticus 19:33-34 (or some other Biblical quote supporting alien) placed at their entrances, on their website, and in their bulletins. *"When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the native-born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God."* [Leviticus 19:33-34].

Resolved: we will continue to minister to whoever comes, make no record of citizenship and work to love our neighbors as ourselves. Both inside our congregations and in our communities.

Rationale:

It is important for Diocese, which contains multiple border crossings, to join with the many voices in the Episcopal church resisting the current treatment of immigrants within the United States.

While the Biblical witness clearly supports welcome to the stranger we often use other language to make out points. As claiming Christian faith supporting or even participating in ICE raids and other suppressions of liberty it important to respond with what the scripture says. This quote from Leviticus is clear and powerful. It also ends the same way the Ten Commandments begin, with the name and authority of the Lord our God. Remember Jesus Christ was a political refugee in Egypt fleeing for his life and his distant ancestor Ruth was an economic refugee in Israel.

The Most Reverend Sean Rowe, our Presiding Bishop, wrote to the church on June 11, 2025:

What we are witnessing is the kind of distortion that arises when institutions like the military and the State Department are turned on the people they were meant to protect. These mainstays of the federal government, designed to safeguard civil society and promote peace and stability, are now being weaponized for political advantage."

In a joint letter the Episcopal bishops in California wrote :

... people are concerned and fearful about the denial of due process for those detained and the potential for ICE raids targeting beloved community institutions and people working to support their families. People feel angry and threatened that the haven they sought in our communities is no longer safe. U.S. citizens and legal residents feel deep grief at losing beloved friends and family members. Children whose parents are deported face uncertain futures. In our churches, we strive to protect our members who are at risk.

Our Baptismal Covenant asks us, "Will you strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being (BCP p. 417)?" This question is a direct and ongoing call to us as persons who follow Christ to live out our calling opposed to injustice, to violence of any kind, and to stand up where human beings are not treated as we would treat a child of God.