October 22, 2026

A Joint Pastoral Letter on Immigration

"When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt; I am the Lord your God." (Leviticus 19:33-34)

As bishops called to care for Episcopal, Lutheran and Methodist churches in Colorado, our faith compels us to express continued and increasing concern about the welfare of immigrants in our communities. We write as people called to love and serve God and our neighbors in every avenue of our lives, including civic life. And we write as spiritual leaders who are alarmed at the ways Christian theology is being warped and weaponized to dehumanize people made in God's image and to justify cruel mistreatment of our immigrant neighbors.

We acknowledge the need for functional, fair, and humane laws and systems to regulate and facilitate U.S. immigration in ways that prioritize safety and security for all. What has unfolded under the current administration is dysfunctional, unjust, and inhumane: a quota-driven and profit-motivated campaign that has swept up undocumented and documented immigrants, refugees and asylees, as well as U.S. citizens and military veterans; has brutalized the very old and traumatized the very young; has endangered life and health in crowded detention centers with unsanitary and unsafe conditions; and has repeatedly targeted, not violent criminals, but ordinary people going to work or keeping court-ordered appointments. Immigrants have been deported to countries to which they have no connection and in which they know no one, without sufficient resources to survive. Young children have been put on trial with no family support and asked impossible questions. People diligently following the lengthy and costly pathways and processes required to immigrate legally have faced termination of protections and changing of rules that betray the assurances our country made to them and violate our national integrity.

Underlying this injustice is a maliciously false rhetoric on the part of elected leaders and political pundits who paint immigrants as inherently dangerous, untrustworthy, or expendable—as problems rather than as people. We know, as do those leaders and pundits, that this is not the reality of immigration in the United States, a nation formed and built through 250 years of immigration, both forced and voluntary. Immigrants are workers, taxpayers, students, teachers, leaders, innovators, artists. Many immigrants are members of our churches and other faith communities; all immigrants are our neighbors. Immigrants

are human beings, made in the image and likeness of God. And as our nation's founding documents proclaim, immigrants like all people are "created equal… [and] endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

In the rite of Christian baptism, we renounce the forces of evil that defy God, and we make promises that include the lifelong commitment "to strive for justice and peace in all the earth," following the ministry and teaching of Jesus Christ. In faithfulness to our baptismal promises, we cannot remain silent in this time. We renounce political rhetoric that bears false witness against our immigrant neighbors. We renounce ICE overreach that has callously ignored due process and has demeaned, injured, and killed both citizens and noncitizen neighbors. We renounce the operation of for-profit ICE detention centers, where gross negligence and mistreatment of immigrants has been regularly reported; we stand against the planned opening of a new ICE detention center at the Big Horn Facility in Hudson, Colorado. We renounce the misuse of Christianity to claim God's favor for any nation over another and to deny the image of God in our neighbors of every place of origin.

In this upcoming U.S. election season, we urge all voters, particularly voters of faith, to vote in accordance with principles of love, mercy, and justice, standards measured not by the welfare of the wealthiest and most powerful in a society but by the welfare of the most vulnerable. We call upon all government officials to honor and protect the process of free and fair elections; and we pray that compassion and wisdom may guide our president and all elected leaders to treat all immigrants as beloved neighbors, made in the image of God and endowed by God with equal rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

In Christ,

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