

ICE Statement
May 17, 2021

This is May 17, 2021. Because it is the 17th of the month, Shadow Rock United Church of Christ brings our immigration justice witness to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement building located at 2035 N Central Ave. Phoenix, AZ. This marks our 77th witness.

We do this to object to the inhumane and cruel tactics of ICE and the Border Patrol. We speak a large truth and a specific truth.

The large truth includes the following:

- our immigration policy does not reflect the values we aspire to uphold as a nation.
- Our immigration policy is in direct contradiction to our understanding of Christian faith and the Great Commandment to love God and love our neighbor.
- Our immigration policy is in direct contradiction of the Golden Rule to do unto others as you would have them do unto you. This is a spiritual and moral principle shared by every religion in the world.
- Our immigration policy reflects an immature society because it does not consider our nation's responsibility of the creation of many of the push/pull factors that cause migration and refugees.

The specific and local truth includes the following:

- Our regional federal ICE and Border Patrol officers purposefully use tactics that are cruel and create chaos and only they know their motivation and we can only speculate but we see the results.
- Our regional federal officers promote a false narrative about immigration that promotes fear, hate, and division in order to justify their institutional existence and cruel tactics.
- Our regional federal officers publicly claim a partnership with local government entities and then violate agreements. They lie and operate as if they are accountable to no one.

- Our regional federal officers publicly claim a partnership with local non-profit agencies dedicated to serve refugees and then violate agreements and disregard the efforts and resources made available to refugees. Again, they lie and operate as if they are accountable to no one.

These are the concerns and a list of our objections. This is what we want to move away from. However, our prophetic witness would be incomplete if we did not share what we want to move toward.

- We want a comprehensive immigration policy that begins with the premise that migration is a natural human phenomenon and not a criminal act.
- We want an immigration policy that treats human beings with dignity and compassion because every human being is a child of God.
- We want a policy that honors the cultural and economic contributions made by immigrants to our society.
- We want multiple paths to citizenship.
- We want a policy that honors family and keeps families together.
- We want a policy that keeps people safe rather than deporting them back into the violence they are fleeing.
- We want a policy that acknowledges the legitimacy of economic refugeeism.
- We want a policy that acknowledge the legitimacy of violent crime refugeeism.
- We want entities that oversee immigration policy to nurture and operate with a culture that internally promotes integrity and transparency.
- We want federal officers committed to that culture.
- We want true partnerships that maximize the effective of the resources of our local governments and local non-profits.
- We want entities that oversee immigration policy to identify and process appropriately people determined to destroy property, exploit vulnerable people, disrupt our communities, and gain in self-interest at the expense of others. This is a small percentage of people and resources and policy should reflect this fact.

Our victories are few, but we take them every chance we get. The Welcome Center is a centralized place where refugees can find shelter, food, medical

attention, and assistance with travel to connect with family. The Welcome Center helps keep track of refugees, provides for basics, keeps them from having to survive on our streets, maximizes resources, and helps them move to the next step in their migrant journey and immigration accountability. Despite multiple conversations with ICE and Border Patrol, and assurances by them to work with the Welcome Center and not abandon our refugee neighbors on the streets without assistance, they did so any way. Not only did ICE and Border Patrol do this in Phoenix, but they also dropped off refugees in small towns hundreds of miles away from the transportation hubs needed for the refugees next leg of their journey to reconnect with family and keep their appointments with ICE. This is a cruel tactic to create chaos and disadvantage vulnerable people to comply with immigration accountability processes. The asylum coalition and the media held ICE and Border Patrol accountable publicly and they have admitted their wrongdoing and for now have stopped this practice and agreed to work with the Welcome Center. This is a victory.

We pray for our refugee and asylum neighbors. We pray for the individuals and non-profits who work every day to serve them and honor their dignity. We pray for our political leadership to have the will to do what is true and right. We pray for the federal officers who lose their humanity because they work in such an unjust and oppressive system. Our witness, work and prayer for a comprehensive immigration reform policy is for all our sakes.