

# Immigrant Welcoming Congregation Declaration of First Congregational UCC in Portland, Oregon



*We are followers of Jesus, who welcomed everyone and treated everyone with dignity and compassion.*

*As members and friends of First Congregational UCC, Portland, Oregon, we are called by our God to work to create a world where there are no longer strangers, responding in word and action whenever lives are made vulnerable or injustice occurs.*

*In these days, we are moved by our faith and consciences to stand together with our immigrant brothers & sisters and their families.*

*Therefore, hereby, we declare ourselves an Immigrant Welcoming Congregation in collaboration and solidarity with the Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ and other faith-based communities.*

*This requires that we build relationships across barriers, educate ourselves, advocate for human rights and accompany our immigrant neighbors in times of need, as follows:*

## **Deepen the connection between immigrant and nonimmigrant members and families within First Congregational UCC and throughout the broader community.**

- We will welcome and listen to the first-hand stories of immigrants and their families in our community who have experienced injustice.
- We will study the sacred stories of migration, injustice, hospitality, and hope which already exist in our own tradition.
- We will build relationships through worship and other activities, such as service projects and community events.
- As soon as possible, our Church Council will establish a committee to develop an Action Plan that implements our Immigrant Welcoming Declaration.

## **Educate ourselves and our community about immigration-related issues**

- We will educate ourselves about issues facing immigrants and their families, including government actions affecting immigration policy.

- We will support organizations that work for immigrant justice/immigration policy reform, and avail ourselves of the resources that they provide.
- We will help educate the wider community on immigration-related issues.

### **Advocate for justice and comprehensive humane immigration reform**

- We will be a compassionate and persistent voice for justice for our immigrant brothers and sisters and their families.
- We will actively and publicly work for comprehensive humane immigration reform in Oregon and the USA, consistent with the policies and social teachings of the [United Church of Christ](#).
- We will support [the position](#) of the United Church of Christ and other faith-based organizations calling for an end to programs that separate families and erode trust between law enforcement and immigrant communities such as the [Secure Communities Program](#) that has led to unjust detentions, deportations, and unnecessary separations within immigrant families.
- We will include our voice as a church community and provide opportunities for individual members to include their voices in addressing immigrant justice.
- We will work cooperatively with the Oregon [Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice \(IMiJ\)](#) organization and encourage individuals to join/participate. We will also work cooperatively with other faith-based communities and encourage others to join in this collaboration.

### **Accompany and support immigrants and their families at their request when facing immigration-related hearings and meetings or seeking change in their immigration status**

- We will accompany immigrants at their request to immigration hearings and meetings related to immigration status to provide witness and support.
- We will provide hospitality and tangible support for immigrants and their families going through immigration-related proceedings.
- We will seek ways to provide support to immigrants and their families facing financial hardship because of immigration-related proceedings and issues.
- We will provide spiritual, material and/or financial support for sister congregations that offer sanctuary for immigrants at imminent risk for deportation.
- We will host, or co-host with other immigrant justice organizations, know-your-rights trainings, legal clinics, citizenship classes, and other educational programs as needed.
- As an Immigrant Welcoming Congregation, we authorize the Senior Minister and the Moderator together to offer emergency short-term physical “safe haven” to immigrants at imminent risk for deportation.