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**Horizons**  
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### **Presbyterian Women in the PC(USA), Inc. Call for Compassion in U.S. Immigration Policy**

Following Jesus' birth, Joseph was awakened in a dream by an angel who warned him that Herod wanted to kill his son, Jesus. Joseph and his family immediately fled to Egypt for safety. Today, hundreds of millions of people worldwide are faced with the same dilemma: live in danger or flee. They face the violence of war, gangs, poverty and persecution, with few options. By the millions, they flee, seeking safety for themselves and their children. Worldwide, there are more than 65 million people fleeing conflict, violence, persecution and other human rights violations. Tens of thousands seek refuge in our nation—a nation of refugees, a land of promise.

As Christians, we believe we are called to show compassion, to welcome the stranger among us. As Presbyterian Women, we call on our government to abolish the harsh immigration policies that turn away refugees and asylum seekers and tear families apart. While the border policy removing children from their families has been ended, thousands of children remain separated from their parents. We encourage our fellow citizens to ask for policies that are in keeping with our nation's highest values—equality, diversity, welcome, inclusion and opportunity for all.

We call on our nation, citizens and governors to live into our best vision for ourselves: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all [people] are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." We ask our leaders and our people to act according to universal human values of caring for others, of treating others as we would be treated. Our own Statue of Liberty espouses our earlier compassion as a nation: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free . . . Send these, the tempest-tost to me. I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

As Presbyterian Women, we strive to live up to the model of compassion we see in God and in Jesus Christ. We work for justice and peace, we build inclusive, caring communities. Our faith tradition tells us, "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 citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt . . ." (Lev. 19:34). To illustrate God's radical hospitality, Jesus told the story of the Samaritan who was moved with pity and showed the stranger mercy (Lk. 10:33, 37). As Christians, we believe refugees are God's people in need, that they are our neighbors. Are we not called to show compassion for our neighbors who suffer?

Yet, as a nation, we turn away those seeking refuge. We, one of the wealthiest nations on earth, a nation of immigrants with just 4 percent of the world's population and 25 percent of the world's wealth, turn refugees away. In 2018 we will resettle just 21,000 refugees—the lowest number since 1977 (globalcitizen.org).

Presbyterian Women calls on our nation to come to the aid of our neighbors. We do not accept that, as a nation, we do not have the capacity to take in those seeking refuge. We do not accept a harsh immigration policy that causes people who are suffering to suffer even more. We do not support a "zero tolerance policy" that is disingenuously touted as a "deterrent" to "illegal entry." Who is deterred? People fleeing the terror of gang violence in Honduras, for example, likely do not know that U.S. border policy has become one of "zero tolerance." They only know that their daughters are at risk of being trafficked and their sons are at risk of being conscripted into gangs. What choice do they have?

*A National Organization Serving Presbyterian Women*

Presbyterian Women decries the callousness with which people are being turned away—people who are suffering oppression, violence, displacement and the desperation of great poverty. Presbyterian Women calls for immigration policy in keeping with our national values and faith tradition. Jesus taught us that we are all members of one body and “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it” (1 Cor. 12:26). May we honor our members in need.

#### What you can do

- Pray for those seeking refuge or asylum, those who govern and set policy, those who advocate and work for justice and peace, and our nation. Pray for God to help you discern your role in promoting justice and peace.
- Extend welcome to refugees and migrants in your community. Get to know neighbors from other countries; learn about them as individuals, and learn about their culture. Help them learn English and navigate government services.
- Ask immigration officials to reunite parents and children who have been separated, as soon as possible and under the care of the community, not in family detention.
- Pay attention to the news and learn what is happening with refugees from around the world. Learn from a variety of news sources, in order to get a broader picture.
- Volunteer with a refugee organization or another ministry that welcomes new Americans. Learn more at <https://kyrm.org>, <https://www.lirs.org>, [www.brycs.org](http://www.brycs.org), [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org), <https://www.rescue.org> and others.
- Find out whether there is a detention center in your area. Visit and see what is happening for yourself. Ask whether the detainees have material needs you can help meet. Report on conditions to your local newspaper, your lawmakers, your church members, your PW group.
- As a circle or other PW or church groups, collect and deliver material necessities for the detainees. Offer comfort through visits.
- Tell the story of your congregation or PW group's efforts to come to the aid of immigrants, especially those who are undocumented and in danger of being snatched from their workplace or home. Send your story to Presbyterian Women's offices in Louisville, attn: [yvonne.hileman@pcusa.org](mailto:yvonne.hileman@pcusa.org).
- Read the recommendations in GA Item 9-14, General Assembly Action on Stopping the Practice of Separating Families, approved by the 223rd General Assembly of the PC(USA). Go to <https://www.pc-biz.org>.
- Read the PC(USA) Stated Clerk's statement on policies that separate families: [https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/jhn\\_statement\\_child\\_separation\\_at\\_borders\\_061618.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/jhn_statement_child_separation_at_borders_061618.pdf).
- Learn more about migrants and refugees in the November/December 2017 issue of *Horizons* magazine. If you aren't a subscriber, order item HZN17250 from [www.presbyterianwomen.org/shop](http://www.presbyterianwomen.org/shop).
- Offer sanctuary at a church in your community for immigrants in danger of being deported. Learn more about sanctuary at [www.pcusa.org/resource/sanctuary-discernment-guide-congregations/](http://www.pcusa.org/resource/sanctuary-discernment-guide-congregations/).
- Make use of the resources listed below.
  - *The Genesis of Exodus* film and story map resources: [www.genesisofexodusfilm.com](http://www.genesisofexodusfilm.com)
  - Office of Immigration Issues on family detention: [www.pcusa.org/familydetention](http://www.pcusa.org/familydetention)
  - *Sanctuary, A Discernment Guide for Congregations*: [https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/pc\(usa\)\\_opw\\_sanctuary\\_final\\_6.21\\_edit.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/pc(usa)_opw_sanctuary_final_6.21_edit.pdf)
  - PC(USA) resources on refugees and asylees: <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/immigration/refugees/>

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