

February 7, 2025

A Statement from Christian Faith Leaders in Erie Regarding Immigration

“Whatsoever you did to the least of my brothers and sisters, you did unto me.”
(Gospel of Matthew, 25:40)

With these words, Jesus Christ gave his followers a most challenging teaching. He instructs them to treat those who are poor, those who are strangers, with love, compassion, and reverence.

As Christ’s followers today, therefore, we strongly condemn the recent executive orders on immigration issued by the new Trump administration, which enable mass deportations, militarize immigration enforcement, allow raids on schools, churches and hospitals in addition to workplaces and homes, expand detention infrastructure, and effectively end asylum. These Orders violate not only the rights and dignity of millions of immigrants and their families, but also the very traditions that have made our country a beacon to refugees fleeing violence and persecution the world over.

These policies will tear families apart and cause immense suffering. These are attempts to sow fear, division, and misery in our communities, and they are sins, entirely incompatible with the principles of our faith.

Immigrants, regardless of their legal status in this country, are human beings. Like all people, they are the beloved children of God, with immeasurable worth and dignity, who do not deserve to live in fear or have to hide in the shadows. We believe that we will be judged, by the God who knows and sees all, according to the way that we treat our neighbors, especially those who are most vulnerable.

Therefore, we call on other Christians, on people of any faith who seek to follow God’s law of love, and on every person of goodwill to reject xenophobic and racist messages and actions. Let us re-commit ourselves to building strong, welcoming, peace-filled communities where all people can live safely.

We urge our representatives to do everything in their power for immigrants and refugees.

Sister Stephanie Schmidt, OSB, Prioress of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie
Sister Anne McCarthy, OSB, Coordinator of Benedictines for Peace
Sister Natalie Rossi, RSM, Director of Erie Justice Committee, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Sister Mary Drexler, SSJ, President of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Northwestern PA
Sister Phyllis McCracken, SSJ, Treasurer of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Northwestern PA
Sister Carol Morehouse, SSJ, Secretary of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Northwestern PA
Deb Seng, Social Justice Coordinator, Sisters of Saint Joseph of Northwestern PA
The Very Reverend Melinda Hall, Dean of the Episcopal Cathedral of Saint Paul
The Reverend Nathan Royster, Wayside Presbyterian Church
The Reverend Dr. James Bernhardt, Wayside Presbyterian Church
The Reverend Britney L.V. Knight, First Presbyterian Church of the Covenant
The Reverend Carol Carlson, Episcopal Church of the Holy Cross, North East, PA
Sister Valerie Luckey, OSB, Director of Emmaus Ministries
Mary T. Nelson and NETWORK Advocates of Erie County