



Becoming an Immigrant Welcoming Community

In June 2017, the Wisconsin Conference of the UCC will declare that a vote be held on becoming an Immigrant Welcoming Conference. To be informed voters, the Wisconsin Conference of the UCC encourages local congregations to study immigration in light of our biblical faith. Following are some of the questions discussed during our Congregation's Immigration study.

What is Christian Hospitality?

Christian hospitality goes beyond friends and families and includes strangers and those who may not be able to repay the hospitality.

Isaiah 16:3-4a

Give counsel, grant justice; make your shade like night at the height of noon; hide the outcasts, do not betray the fugitive; let the outcasts of Moab settle among you; be a refuge to them from the destroyer."

What is the Benefit of Welcoming Diversity?

Darrell Pofahl, author of a book on minorities in La Crosse, writes that some *"express a sense of concern that the homogeneity of the (La Crosse) population deprives people of an opportunity to experience the cultural richness and inter-racial interaction that an ethnically diverse population can provide... making it more difficult to identify with the concept of the world as a global community."*

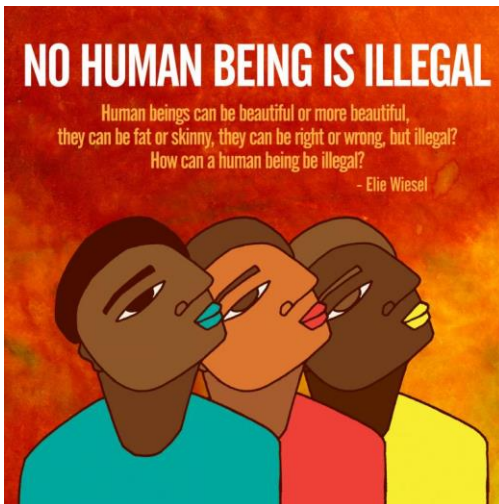
What is Needed to Become a Welcoming Community?

1. A pathway into the community: educational and occupational skills matching La Crosse's economy at the time
 - Currently La Crosse lacks jobs for immigrants

- More find jobs in Arcadia's furniture and chicken businesses, Norwalk and Sparta's meat packing plants, and in the dairy business
- Wisconsin has blocked legislation that would allow undocumented to drive legally
- 2. Sizeable existing immigration community (smaller communities are less safe and supportive)
 - La Crosse does not have a sizeable existing Latino immigrant and Syrian population
 - Undocumented live in the shadows, fearing family separation and deportation
- 3. Language training that does not dictate loss of home language
 - WTC continues to offer English classes as it did for German, Hmong and other immigrants

What Should Our Congregation Do?

- Practice Christian hospitality to other groups in our region: different religions, sexual orientations, and cultures
 - This will require going out into the community and building relationships
- Continue to be an active member of the Compassionate Community Faith Alliance (CCFA)
- Continue to support CCFA Immigration Task Force's Centro Latino
- Encourage the development of public policy dedicated to facilitating the respectful inclusion of all immigrants in Wisconsin



Zachariah 7:8-10

The word of the Lord came to Zechariah, saying: This says the Lord of hosts: Render true judgements, show kindness and mercy to one another; do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the alien, or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.