

# Moving Toward Declaring Wisconsin Conference UCC an Immigrant Welcoming Conference

The Conference Board of Directors brings forth a resolution to declare the Conference an Immigrant Welcoming Conference. This resolution was placed on the agenda of the 2016 Annual Meeting with the support of the Board of Directors. The full text of the Immigrant Welcoming Conference resolution is on a following page.

This resolution is supported by the Wisconsin Conference Immigration Working Group.

This process for adopting resolutions calls for a vote of the annual meeting when first brought forth, followed by one year of study by the local congregations, and a confirming vote at the next year's annual meeting.

The action at the business meeting this year will be to begin this process.

An online resource is available for local congregations to use to guide their discussions and provides suggestions on ways to enhance their study of this issue. The process calls for at least 30% of the congregations to report that they have engaged in some study. This study can be in the manner as chosen by the local church. This local study only calls for some discussion; it does not require that any action be taken or decision voted on. Responses are expected by March 1, 2017.

At the annual meeting in June 2017, the vote to formally adopt the resolution will be held.

The Immigration Working Group is available to provide support during the year of study and to be a resource to any local congregation, any committee, any Association body, any clergy group or any other gathering that will be holding discussions. To reach a member of the working group, contact the Conference office and the request will be forwarded to someone who can best be of assistance.

## Immigrant Welcoming Conference Resolution

Resolution Calling on the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ to declare itself to be an Immigrant Welcoming Conference and calling on its Congregations to Covenant as Immigrant Welcoming Congregations

### WHEREAS

WHEREAS the International Association for Refugees has stated, "The world is in the midst of a long-term refugee crisis;" and

WHEREAS thousands of refugees and migrants, including those seeking asylum, come from throughout the world to the United States seeking safety, security, freedom, and opportunity; and

WHEREAS our immigrant brothers and sisters continue to suffer as they fear raids, deportation, and seeing their families torn apart; and

WHEREAS the Jewish and Christian tradition honors this text: "When an immigrant resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the immigrant. The immigrant who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen

among you; you shall love the immigrant as yourself, for you were immigrants in the land of Egypt” (Leviticus 19:33-34, adapted from NRSV); and

WHEREAS Jesus says, “‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:31, NRSV); and

WHEREAS Jesus further says in Matthew 25 of those who will receive the kingdom, “When I was hungry, you gave me something to eat, and when I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink. When I was a stranger you welcomed me...” (Matthew 25:35 Contemporary English Version); and

WHEREAS migrants bring us as offerings their stories and experiences, dreams and hopes, energy and skills; and

WHEREAS our new neighbors experience difficulties adjusting to life in a new country, difficulties such as language barriers, culture shock, a sense of loss, and isolation; and

WHEREAS the welcome and support immigrants receive helps in the building of safe communities and future prosperity; and

WHEREAS the United Church of Christ (UCC) declares “No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcomed here;” and

WHEREAS the Twenty-ninth General Synod passed a compassionate immigration resolution that included encouraging “congregations to further engage in education work on immigration from a faith perspective, participating in border delegations and work toward making your congregation an Immigrant Welcoming Congregation;”

## **BE IT RESOLVED**

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ declares itself an “Immigrant Welcoming Conference” and that it encourages the development of policies dedicated to facilitating the respectful welcome and inclusion of all immigrants into Wisconsin.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ calls on its members and congregations to become active “Immigrant Welcoming Congregations and Communities” and that it assist this process by making available on the Conference website the following resource which includes additional resources; “Becoming an Immigrant Welcoming Congregation-The Journey is Made by Walking,” as well as any assistance requested of the Wisconsin Conference Immigration Working Group.

## **FUNDING**

The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Officers of the Conference in consultation with the Wisconsin Conference Immigration Working Group will assist congregations in the implementation of this resolution.