

Immigration Resource Team

Delegate approval of the Immigration Resolution at ACA 2019 gave our team the mandate to “...*investigate, evaluate, and help congregations implement the resolution.*”

Our first step was to create a survey that was sent to churches. A big THANK YOU to those who responded! We are pleased and encouraged to hear of the many ways the immigration issue is being addressed in our congregations. There have been sermons, Sunday School class discussions, guest speakers, letters to elected officials, assembly of Detainee Care Kits, and much more!

However, the voice of Jesus continues to call us to “**welcome the stranger.**” This begins with a willingness to make friends with immigrants and learn to know them.

Listen to their stories ... and you will be changed! There are many stories to be shared from within our conference and beyond, some inspiring and some gut-wrenching. Some glimpses:

~**Sara King**, working as a nurse practitioner at Akron Children’s Hospital in New Philadelphia, ministers to thousands of Guatemalans in Tuscarawas County, who benefit from her competent and compassionate care.

~**Open Arms** (eastern Ohio) and **Brazo en Brazo** (western Ohio) continue to minister to Hispanic immigrants in a variety of ways.

~**Conference staff and several pastors** are building bridges with a Congolese congregation in Akron.

~**One family at LifeBridge Community Church in Dover** has brought two high school students into their home as their own children, in order to help them master English and finish high school.

~ **Another family in Dover** accompanied an 18-year-old woman through the delivery of her baby girl, and several weeks later kept mom and baby in their home for several days following the young mother’s gallbladder surgery.

~**Dan King, when offering a ride**, had a face-to-face encounter with ICE (U.S. Immigration and Custom Enforcement) agents in December. They surrounded his pickup and (mistakenly, it turns out) took a 22-year-old man out of his truck in handcuffs.

Through building trust and listening, we become acquainted with the grief of others. We have heard heartbreaking stories from parents whose children have been killed by gang members in their countries of origin, and of young women sexually abused during their long journey to seek asylum at our southern border.

There are many opportunities to share God’s love, hope, and peace!

Get involved as the Holy Spirit leads you! We have listed a few resources on the back. Feel free to contact us for more ideas.

We would like to add an additional member to our team, particularly from the western side of the state, to keep immigration issues at the forefront. If you have a calling or passion in this regard, please contact any of us.

In the peace and compassion of Christ,

Alysa Short - alysashort@gmail.com (419) 572-1348

Dan King - dlinking@gmail.com (330) 466-1269

Greg Bowman - gmbowman33@gmail.com (330) 853-1604

Resources

Welcoming the Stranger (Soerens and Yang) - Excellent book for individual or group study, discussion questions for each chapter.

San Antonio Mennonite Church - amazing stories of ministry with immigrants that this small congregation, led by Pastor John Garland, is doing. Two items: "Christian questions to ask about immigration"; one-hour lecture on "Trauma Healing."
<https://www.sanantoniomennonite.org>

Evangelical Immigration Table - *Principles for Immigration Reform*; "News" tab - inspiring Stories. <http://evangelicalimmigrationtable.com>

Welcome. Immigrants. Women's network. <https://www.welcomingimmigrants.org/>

East Central Ohio Sanctuary Network - Interfaith organization committed to providing welcome and safety for immigrants. <https://www.ecosn.net/>

Immigrant Worker Project - Faith-based organization in Canton. Has provided legal and material assistance to immigrants for more than 20 years.

https://iwpo.org/english_version/program.htm

Open Arms Hispanic Ministry - Anabaptist organization with office at Orrville Mennonite Church that has been ministering to Hispanic immigrants since 2000.
<http://www.openarmshispanicministry.org>

Brazo en Brazo - Spanish-language spiritual ministry to individuals and families.
Contact: Marti Meza (419) 296-9574

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) - Immigration resources.
<https://mcc.org/learn/what/categories/immigration>

Anabaptist Church Tour - Guatemala & El Salvador: Oct. 17-28, 2020
Charlie Geiser geisersemilla@gmail.com (574) 612-8361

The Matthew 25 Movement/Pledge - Immigration toolkit. www.matthew25pledge.com

The Stranger* - A film on immigration and scripture. <http://www.thestrangerfilm.org>

Men with Guns* - Filmed in a Latin American country, we meet a doctor searching for his former students, only to learn that they've been taken by "men with guns."

The Other Side of Immigration* - A 2010 documentary that explores why so many people leave the Mexican countryside to work in the USA.

El Norte* - Peasants escaping mindless labor and a murderous Guatemalan government head to America in hopes for something better.

A Better Life* - Hard-working, undocumented single dad works to reconnect with his teenage son and keep him from getting pulled into the local gang life.

***Note:** Some films may contain language or other content that some may find offensive.