



Becoming An Immigrant Welcoming Congregation

A Journey Made By Walking

A Message from the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ Immigration Team

The 2016 annual meeting of our conference will be asked to approve the *Resolution Calling on the Fifty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ and its Congregations to Covenant as Immigrant Welcoming Congregations*.

The *Immigrant Welcoming* process is, first and foremost, a process that challenges us to learn and grow. Using the Open and Affirming process as a model, the *Immigrant Welcoming* movement uses two primary sources as its inspiration: the first is Biblical witness; the second is General Synod XIII's *Pronouncement on Justice in Immigration*.

In *Justice in Immigration*, General Synod XIII recognized that “the stranger and the sojourner always challenge the ethical and moral limits of the human community and the community of faith.” The synod nevertheless affirms the stranger is “God’s dialogue with human history [and] the sign of renewal and life. God utilizes the stranger to challenge and replenish the human situation and to proclaim grace and mercy as well as righteousness and life. For it is not only that Jesus was sent as a stranger, but that Jesus came as the stranger who brings us life and more abundant life.”

We invite you to exploration and discernment. It is our conviction that each community which challenges itself to embrace the *Immigrant Welcoming* process is a community open to the dialogue God initiates within our current time and context. We also recognize that in each community, the nature of this dialogue will reflect that community’s unique relationship with God. For this reason, we do not present a one-size-fits-all process. We do not dictate what becoming *Immigrant Welcoming* looks like. Instead, we offer this document as a menu of activities, resources and suggestions which inform what the process *might look like* for your community.

Lastly, we offer ourselves as partners to your congregation as you engage in this discernment. This is our ministry. This is where we see our calling. We are open to learning and teaching,

advising and listening, accompanying and cheering your community along on its journey towards affirming itself as *Immigrant Welcoming*. Our prayer is that on this journey we come to a greater understanding of that very abundance of life that we find together in Jesus.

Special Thanks and Acknowledgement

In 2011 a group of students at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities collaborated on a source book which they titled *Pilgrimage: Thinking Theologically about Immigration Issues*. The authors were Deb Braun, Judy Keim, Cathy Kolwey, Dana Strande, Hosie Thurmond, and Terry Williams. The resources they gathered are very relevant to Minnesota communities. We wish to thank them and acknowledge them for their hard work. When we list a resource that they compiled in *Pilgrimage*, we will denote it with a the † symbol.

We would be remiss if we did not mention that the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ drafted a document of the same name. We based our handbook off of this.

A Message from the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ Immigration Team Special Thanks and Acknowledgement

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Document Revision History

1. Learn about Our Faith

We live in a world of people on the move. According to the United Nations, there are over 59.5 million forcibly displaced people in the world. The Bible is full of stories about God's people being forced to leave their countries, Adam and Eve, Noah, Sarah and Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Naomi, Esther, Jeremiah, Jesus, Mary and Joseph to name some. We, in the United Church of Christ find our grounding in God's Word about how we are to treat the stranger in our midst. We, in the UCC, believe we are called to offer an "extravagant welcome." Below are some resources to deepen your understanding of God's call to us.

- Biblical References to Immigrants and Refugees
http://www.ucc.org/justice_immigration_worship_biblical-references-to
- Interfaith Scriptures on Immigration
http://www.ucc.org/justice_immigration_worship_interfaith-scriptures
- *Faith and Immigration* (with Reflection Questions): A theological exploration of immigration and overview of the UCC's General Synod's thinking on this issue.
http://www.ucc.org/justice_immigration_worship_faith-and-immigration
- Theological Reflections on Immigration by Daniel G. Groody, C.S.C. including:
 1. Dying to Live: Theology, Migration and the Human Journey
 2. Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees
 3. Dying to Live: Theology, Migration, and the Human Journey
 4. *Strangers in the Land*, a 6 week Bible study dealing with immigration issues, developed by Sojourner Magazine. <http://www.faithandimmigration.org/resources/strangers-land>

2. Build Relationships Through Face to Face Encounters

Relationship building is part of our calling as Christians. It is a cornerstone of our journey with God. It is in the encounter with others that we meet God more fully. When you get to know people through face to face encounters and hear their struggles, relationships are cemented. As we meet, encounter and grow in our relationships with the immigrants in our community, state, and country, we can build a movement for justice together with our immigrant brothers and sisters.

Minnesota is home to the largest Somali, Liberian, and Hmong populations outside their native countries. We also have migrants from Mexico, Central America, and other parts of Asia and

Africa. At this point in time, about 75% of our Minnesota immigrants live in the 7 county metro area with the other 25% living in other areas throughout Minnesota.

There are several ways to get to know your immigrant neighbors. One way is through visiting the religious communities where they worship. Attending a local function sponsored by immigrants in the area is a good way to begin to learn about their culture and become supportive of them. A third way to encounter and support our immigrant brothers and sisters is by working together on immigrant justice. The following list are a few of the groups that you can have face to face encounters with as together you work on justice issues.

- **Navigate MN** (works for immigration justice and education equity)
<http://www.navigatemn.org/>
- **Manos a la Obra**: a Mexican American women's cooperative in south Minneapolis, MN where Latino women make jewelry together and support each other and sponsor events such as Queen for a Day to provide support for Latino women in their community.
- **CLUES**: a resource and service center run by Latinos for Latinos
- **MIRAC** (Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Committee): Sign up on their Facebook page to learn about actions they take regarding the rights of immigrants, Latinos and others working together for justice.
- **ISAIAH**: this organization has immigration justice as a key component of their justice work. 100 diverse churches work together. Contact Catalina Morales at ISAIAH for more information.
- Volunteer to work with an **ESL** group in your community as you tutor people in learning English. Check with your local school's Community Education program. Many Community Education programs offer ESL classes through Adult Basic Education.
- **Conversations with Friends (CWF)** training is provided to enable you to be a visitor of immigrants in various detention centers in Minnesota. For more information, contact Steve Kramer at stevekraemer@outlook.com
- **MN Council of Churches**: this is a good place to learn about refugees and consider co-sponsoring a refugee family. Your church can help assist them in becoming part of your community. (612.874.8605)
- Contact the **Minnesota Conference Immigration Team** to provide more local resources to enable your engagement with immigrants. Contact uccmn.immigration@gmail.com

3. Learn about Root Causes for Immigration

Our media does not provide a deep analysis of why immigrants are seeking asylum or refugee status in the US or specifically in MN. It is vital for the understanding of why migrants are arriving to know the forces that push them out of their countries. There is a long history of the United States relationships with countries throughout the world that have led to migrants seeking refugee or asylum status. Through our trade policies, such as NAFTA and CAFTA, through our history of multinational corporations stripping other countries of resources that has

led to forcing people off their lands, and through wars, migrants risk their lives to seek safety and economic security here in the US. Learning about these factors is important for increasing our understanding of why migrants are here and enabling us to then be sharers of that truth with others.

Here are some potential resources to deepen your church's' understanding of why migrants are arriving in MN:

- What are the Roots Causes of Migration?:
<https://www.weareoneamerica.org/root-causes-migration-fact-sheet>
- Rethinking the Immigration Debate: Addressing the Root Causes of Migration.
<http://www.rop.org/wp-content/uploads/Root%20Causes%20of%20Mexican%20Migration.pdf>
- *Illegal People: How Globalization Creates Migration and Criminalizes Immigrants* by David Bacon
- *The Right to Stay Home: How US Policy Drives Mexican Migration:* by David Bacon
- Energy of a Nation: Immigrants in America, 3rd ed.
http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/uploads/eon_lesson_5.pdf
- Invite the Conference Immigration to your church to do a presentation about the root causes of migration. uccmn.immigration@gmail.com

4. Study United Church of Christ Teachings on Immigration

Some congregations may find it helpful to learn about United Church of Christ teachings on immigration. Our denomination has a long history of being on the forefront of calling for justice on many issues.

Pronouncements and Resolutions Passed by General Synods

Pronouncements are a big deal. A *pronouncement* is a statement of Christian conviction on a matter of moral or social principle and has been adopted by a two-thirds vote of a General Synod. This is the strongest statement a General Synod can make. Pronouncements establish programming priorities for national boards and other General Synod related ministries. Saying no to a pronouncement is not an option for these entities.

Justice in Immigration

In 1981, General Synod XIII passed a pronouncement entitled **Justice in Immigration**. The summary¹ reads:

¹ Reformatted for readability.

[This] pronouncement calls attention to global and domestic implications of United States immigration policy (both governmental and private sector) and recommends policies which call for:

- public and private practices which reduce worldwide pressures on persons to migrate
- a more open, flexible and humane United States immigration and refugee policy
- more humane administration of immigration law protecting civil rights
- protection of undocumented persons during transition to new policies and laws
- greater involvement of the United Church of Christ in aiding immigrants in resettlement

General Synod Resolutions

Since then, General Synods have passed many resolutions speaking to the church on the vital humanitarian issues that surround immigration justice.

- **In Support of Salvadoran Refugees** (GS XIII, 1981)
- **Affirming the Dignity and Self-Worth of Immigrants** (GS XX, 1995)
- **Border justice issues** (GS XXII, 1999)
- **Emergency resolution to end the death of migrants on the United States-Mexico border by offering water in Christ's Name** (GS XXIII, 2001)
- **Call for a more humane US immigration policy; end immigrant deaths; support immigrant communities** (GS XXVI, 2007): border enforcement strategy is inhumane and ineffective, guarantee rights to immigrant workers.
- **Resolution Supporting Compassionate Comprehensive Immigration Reform and the Protection of the Human Rights of Immigrants** (GS XXIX, 2013)

Resolutions Passed by the Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ

- **Resolution on Immigration Enforcement** (St Anthony Park UCC, 2007): In protest of 2006 Worthington, MN ICE Swift meat packing plant raid
- **Resolution in Support of the Interfaith Platform on Immigration Reform** (Justice & Witness Ministries, 2011)
- **Resolution in Support of Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en Lucha** (Justice and Witness Ministries, 2011)
- **Resolution in support of an end to the DHS/ICE daily detention level mandate** (MNUCC Immigration Team, 2014)

5. Explore Immigration in Documentary & Film

A good way for a church to begin their journey of learning more about the story of our current migrants is through the viewing of a documentary or film. Two films have been produced in Minnesota about local communities and the third was produced by Minnesotans.

- **Abrazos** by Luis Argueta. This is the story of how a church in Worthington, MN with a large Guatemalan population made it possible for their US citizen children to travel to Guatemala to meet their extended families. See the trailer on Vimeo.
- **Arrival: Finding Home** This documentary follows five women who have migrated to Austin, Minnesota from various parts of the world. Learn about their journeys to Austin and their experiences in becoming members of that community.
- **Gold Fever** a documentary film made by Minnesotans with support from the UCC about how our multinational corporations have led to environmental and community destruction in Guatemala, pushing the eventual migration of many. www.goldfevermovie.com/. Contact Thom Haines to show this film and lead a discussion afterwards. Thom.haines@comcast.net

Through the work of the Rev. John Guttermann's immigration ministry, churches and communities in Minnesota have been on the journey of growing in their understanding and support of refugees and immigrants in our country. Rev. Guttermann procured licenses to show numerous films and documentaries about immigration which he shared with congregations in Minnesota and beyond. Below is a list of some of those films. Contact the Conference Immigration Team if you are interested in viewing one of them. We will continue our immigration work in memory of John.

Here is a partial listing:

- **Harvest Of Empire: The Story Of Latinos In America.** Based on the landmark book, "Harvest of Empire" by award-winning journalist Juan González: a feature-length documentary that reveals the direct connection between the long history of U.S. intervention in Latin America and the immigration crisis we face today. 93 minutes.
- **Papers** - Stories of Undocumented Youth. Interweaves the history of immigration in the United States with the stories of undocumented students from several nations. 88 minutes (can be adapted to 63 minutes, shorter version recommended).
- **Which Way Home** (2010; the 2010 Emmy Award For Outstanding Informational Programming The Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award). Which Way Home shows the personal side of immigration through the eyes and stories of children. These are stories of hope and courage, disappointment and sorrow. 83 minutes.
- **Lost in Detention: The Hidden World of Immigration Enforcement (2011)**
more than one million immigrants have been deported since President Obama took office, deportations and detentions have reached record levels. The get-tough policy has brought complaints of abuse and harsh

treatment. This PBS Frontline film investigates Obama's enforcement strategies and journeys into the secretive world of immigrant detention, with a penetrating look at who is being detained and what is happening to them. 60 minutes. **Free to view online!**

- **Not In Our Town: Light In The Darkness (2011)**

This documentary follows a community in crisis after the fatal attack on a local immigrant resident. Stunned by the violence, diverse community stakeholders openly confront the crime and the divisive atmosphere, and commit to ongoing actions to prevent future hate crimes and intolerance. 60 minutes.

- **Brother Towns:** a story of two towns linked by immigration, family, and work: Jacaltenango, a highland Maya town in Guatemala; and Jupiter, a coastal resort town where many Jacaltecos have settled in Florida. A great 'first film' that explores why people come and the different responses of people in Jupiter, Florida to the immigrants in their community. 58 minutes.

- **AbUSed:** An important film about the Postville immigration raid and the aftermath; describes what happened, its effects on the Postville community and the immigrants and their families; includes interviews with participants and visits individuals who were deported after their return to Guatemala (including citizen children born in the US). 97 minutes.

- **Dying to Live: A Migrant's Journey (2006)** An excellent film introducing us to migrants, why they come to the United States, and the dangerous journey many make to cross our southern border. 33 minutes.

- **Who Is Dayani Cristal?** An anonymous body in the Arizona desert sparks the beginning of a real-life human drama. The search for identity leads us back across a continent to seek out the people left behind and the meaning of a mysterious tattoo.

- **Immigrants for Sale (YouTube 2015)**

This 33 minute documentary let's you get a look into the for profit private prison industry and the money making venture of this industry on the backs of immigrants. The Corrections Corporation of America and ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council) promote the incarceration of immigrant and provide conditions that are a best questionable.

6. Explore Immigration in Worship and Communion

Worship is an intentional communal thin spot. It is a place where we intentionally prepare ourselves to encounter God. Within the worship experience lives transform, questions reframe, priorities reorder, and purposes realign to God's purpose through the power of the Holy Spirit. Communities which explore their connections to their immigrant sisters and brothers within the context of worship will naturally form deeper connections with the people and the stories they uncover there.

For this reason, we found it important to include a resources that congregations can use to facilitate worship planning. These resources are available through the United Church of Christ and our ecumenical partners.

Prayers, Litanies, and Liturgies

- Immigration Justice Worship Resources, United Church of Christ
http://www.ucc.org/justice_immigration_worship_index This page contains prayers, litanies, complete liturgies, and sermon examples compiled over the last decade.
- Not One More Deportation: Worship Resources for Immigrant Rights Sunday
http://www.ucc.org/justice_immigration_worship_not-one-more-deportation
- Prayers and Litanies for Worship †
<http://www.mnchurches.org/refugeeservices/wpcontent/uploads/2011/08/Refugee-Sunday-Service-Planning-Materials.pdf>
- A collection of prayers regarding immigration from various Christian denominations †
<http://www.uua.org/immigration/worship/index.shtml>
- Responsive readings, prayer and scripture resources †
<http://www.welcometheimmigrant.org/worship/>
- Worship Tools (Litanies for the uprooted, refugees and asylees)
<http://lirs.org/worship-tools/>
- Citizens of Heaven: “Keep yourself as a pilgrim and a stranger here in this world, as one to whom the world’s business counts but little. Keep your heart free, and always lift it up to God.”
~Thomas à Kempis
- “Prayer is where the action is.” ~ John Wesley

Hymns from the New Century Hymnal

- Tú has venido a la orilla (You have come down to the Lakeshore), (173)
- De Colores (Sing of Colors), (402)
- We are Marching in the Light of God, (526)
- We Are Not Our Own, (564)
- Lead Us From Death to Life, (581) † Based on 2 John 1:3; Isa. 2:2-4
- Through all the world a hungry Christ (587)
- How Beautiful, Our Spacious Skies (594) † Affirmation of the Americas, indigenous and immigrant peoples
- This is My Song (591) † Hope for lasting peace & justice among nations, peoples and cultures
- O for a World (575) † Based on Acts 4:32-35; 1 Cor. 1:26-31; 1 Pet. 3:8-12
- Profetiza, Pueblo mío (You Shall Prophesy, All My People) (578) † Solidarity with the oppressed and the call to build a loving, just society
- For the Healing of the Nations (576) † Justice, peace and human rights
- Lead On Eternal Sovereign (573) † Prayer, preparation and strength for the work of justice
- Spirit of Jesus, If I Love My Neighbor (590) † Based on Rom. 13:8-14.

7. Create an Immersion Experience

The best way to get excited about becoming an immigrant welcoming congregation is through meeting and getting to know our immigrant brothers and sisters. Where two or three are gathered, there is God in the midst of us. This has surely been the case for those who have had the opportunity to spend time getting to know immigrants. Most of our MN Conference congregations do not have any or many immigrants who are a part of our congregations. There are other ways to engage with the immigrant community.

- Join others (through ISAI AH, MIRAC, Jewish Community Action, Unions) who sponsor marches or vigils with our immigrant brothers or sisters.
- Visit a church where immigrants attend and begin conversations.
- Become a Conversation With Friends visitor and have meaningful visits with those immigrants who are detained.
- Volunteer to be an ESL teacher or assistant
- Make a border trip where you can meet immigrants and learn their difficulties in escaping the violence in their country as well as what they have experienced since arriving.
 - Contact Vicki Schmidt at Abriendo Fronteras: <http://www.openingborders.com/> for trips to the El Paso/ Ciudad Juarez border
 - Contact Borderlinks at <http://www.borderlinks.org/> for info about trips to the border at Tucson and Nogales
- Visit communities that have large immigrant populations.
 - Worthington, MN St. Mary's Catholic Church
<https://www.facebook.com/Saint-Marys-Church-Iglesia-Catolica-de-Santa-M>
 - Pelican Rapids is a town in northern Minnesota with a diverse population from Europe, Africa, and Latin America that was attracted there with the opening up of a turkey plant. Through the loving work of 5 women, this community was mobilized to welcome immigrants to their town and make them a vibrant part of their community. Visit there during Pelican Days and witness this amazing community. <http://www.pelicanrapidschamber.com/pelicanfest.html>
- Contact the Immigration team (uccmn.immigration@gmail.com) for more ideas

8. Hold a Small Group or Congregation Wide Book Study

There are many helpful books written about the immigrants that have come to the United States. Some of those books detail the policies that the US has put in place which have led to migration for thousands of people. Others detail what the journey is like for migrants as they seek safety and economic security. Or you may be interested in learning about the experience of those without papers and are forced to live in the shadows. You can also read about the contributions that immigrants make to our communities. If you have people who like to read in your congregation, you may want to conduct a book discussion based on one of the following books.

Here is a list to get you started, note that the first one is written by a Minnesotan about the experience of immigrants settling in Pelican Rapids, Minnesota.

- *Faces of Change* by Joan Jarvis Ellison (the story of immigrants from around the world coming to work in a turkey factory, this book explores the challenges for the migrants as well as the challenges for those living in this small rural Minnesota community. Read how five women mobilized a community to offer an extravagant welcome to hundreds of immigrants.
- *Green Card Youth Voices*, a book of stories of young people recently arrived in Minnesota from around the world, compiled by Tea Rozman Clark.
- *Detained and Deported: Stories of Immigrant Families Under Fire*, Margaret Regan
- *Open Borders: the Case Against Immigration Controls* by Teresa Hayter
- *The Devil's Highway: A True Story* by Luis Alberto Urrea
- *Tailings of War and Peace* by Stephen Law
- *Our God is Undocumented: Biblical Faith and Immigration Justice* by Chad Myers and Matthew Colwell
- *The Politics of Immigration* by Jane Guskin and David L. Wilson
- *The Right to Stay Home: How US policy Drives Mexican Migration* by David Bacon
- *One Family Under God: Immigration Politics and Progressive Religions in America* by Grace Yukich
- *Enrique's Journey: The Story of a Boy's Dangerous Odyssey to Reunite with His Mother* by Sonia Nazario
- *No Longer Strangers: The Practice of Radical Hospitality* by Rev. Wendy Taylor a UCC pastor whose passion for working with immigrants begins to ignite a fire in her church and community and leads to the creation of a new organization with broad community support.
- *Undocumented: How Immigration Became Illegal* by Aviva Chomsky
- *Working in the Shadows: A Year of Doing Jobs Most Americans Won't Do* by Gabriel Thompson follow this reporter as he goes undercover for a year to better understand the life of immigrants living in the shadows.
- *They Are Us: Lutherans and Immigration* by Stephen Bowman and Ralston Deffenbaugh
- *The Tortilla Curtain* by T.C. Boyle
- *The River Flows North* by Graciela Limon, Publisher: Arte Público Press (2009) ISBN: 9781558855854) †
- *Try to Remember* by Iris Gomez, Publisher: Grand Central Publishing (2010) ISBN: 9780446556194 †
- *Just Coffee: Caffeine with a Conscience* by Mark Adams and Tommy Bassett III, Publisher: Just Trade Center, ISBN: 978-0981797601 †

The Somali Experience

- Abdullahi, Mohamed Diriye. *Culture and Customs of Somalia*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001. † General reference on the culture and customs of Somalia, written by a native Somali. High school / Adult.

- Aktar, Nasreen. *Samira's Eid / Samiira iyo Ciiddii*. London: Mantra Publishing Ltd., 1999. † An introduction to the Muslim holiday of Eid, in both English and Somali. Good for grades K-3.
- Ayanle, Nadifo. *A Somali Alphabet / Alfabeetadda Soomaaliyeed*. Portland, ME: Maine Humanities Commission, 2001. † Bilingual book links stories and memories of Somalia with the letters of the Somali alphabet.
- Fox, Mary Virginia. *Somalia*. New York: Children's Press, 1996. † Facts and photos provide an introduction to Somalia. Good for grades 3-6.
- Hassan, Marian A. *Dhegdheer: A Scary Somali Folktale*. St. Paul, MN : Minnesota Humanities Commission, Somali Bilingual Book Project, c.2007. † This bilingual book tells a traditional Somali folktale. Good for grades K-3.
- Hussein, Ikram. *Teenage Refugees from Somalia Speak Out*. New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc., 1997. † Teenage Somali refugees tell their heartbreaking stories of fleeing their homes and moving to a new country. Good for grades 4 and up.
- Mirreh, Abdirahman. *From an Acacia Landscape: Poetry 1983-1993*. Great Britain, Haan Publishing, 1996. †
- Roble, Abdi and Doug Rutledge. *The Somali Diaspora: A Journey Away*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008. † Photo essays show the lives of Somalis in Somalia, Minneapolis, and Columbus, Ohio.

The Hmong Experience

- Cha, Dia. *Dia's Story Cloth: The Hmong People's Journey of Freedom*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2001. † The story of story of Dia, a young Hmong refugee, is told through a traditional Hmong story cloth, woven by Dia's aunt and uncle. Good for grades 1-6.
- Donnelly, Nancy D. *Changing Lives of Refugee Hmong Women*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997. † Female Hmong refugees in Seattle, and their changing roles in society.
- Fadiman, Anne. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1997. † This non-fiction book explores the conflict between Hmong traditional beliefs and the medical system in the U.S.
- Hillmer, Paul. *A People's History of the Hmong*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 2009. † A narrative history of the worldwide community of Hmong people.
- Moua, Mai Neng, Ed. *Bamboo Among the Oaks: Contemporary Writing by Hmong Americans*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 2002. † An anthology of poetry, essays, and short stories by first and second generation Hmong Americans.
- Symonds, Patricia V. *Calling In The Soul: Gender And The Cycle Of Life In A Hmong Village*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005. † This book examines Hmong beliefs regarding the cycle of life and how those beliefs are expressed in practices surrounding childbirth, marriage and death.
- Vang, Chia Youyee. *Hmong in Minnesota*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 2008. † A brief history of the arrival of the Hmong in Minnesota in the 1970s, their struggle to build community in a new land, and the challenges they face today.

- Yang, Kao Kalia. *The Latehomecomer: a Hmong Family Memoir*. Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 2008. † Kao Kalia Yang, a young Hmong Minnesotan, tells the tale of her family's escape from Laos to refugee camps in Thailand in the 1970s, her birth in Ban Vinai camp, and the family's struggles in the U.S. after relocating there when Yang was six.

9. Prayerful Action: Get Involved in a Local Campaign

“and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?”
Micah 6:8 NRSV

It is in the doing of justice that we experience the God of justice walking with us. We are called to action! There are many ways that you can get involved in seeing that justice is done for our immigrant brothers and sisters. One of those is through prayerful action.

1. **Hold or join a prayer vigil.** For five years on the first Sunday of the month different faith communities have led a vigil in front of the Ramsey County Detention Center. There are also detention centers in Sherburne County, in Elk River, Freeborn County Jail in Alberta Lea, and the Carver County Jail in Chaska. Contact the Immigration team for how to get permission to undertake this.
2. **Stay Informed.** During January through May each year, the MN Legislature looks at bills that are being proposed, often times bills that involve our immigrant brothers and sisters are among them. Keep abreast of what is happening in the Legislative session. This year there is a bill that will decide if a for profit prison will be opened in Appleton, MN. Join others in campaigning against this. For several years the Legislature has debated whether or not to grant driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants. We continue this campaign. .
3. **Call your legislators.** Contact the I Team to get on a list of people interested in receiving action alerts to call your Legislators or Congressional Representatives about issues that are being considered by the State Legislature or Congress. If you want training in how to make contacts, the I Team will be happy to assist you.

10. Create a Covenant

When your congregation has decided that they want to embrace becoming an immigrant welcoming congregation, developing a covenant is the next important step to take. A covenant in our faith tradition is an agreement that God makes with God's people. It indicates what God will do and what God's faithful followers are to do. This is not something to be taken lightly. It is a sacred arrangement. Create a covenant that fits what your church sees as God's call to them. Each covenant will look unique to that particular congregation. It is important that the covenant

has “feet.” In other words, when your congregation is ready to declare itself an Immigrant Welcoming Congregation, your covenant should include what your congregation will do to continue that covenantal journey.

Examples of covenants adopted by Minnesota UCC congregations:

Mayflower Community Congregational Church

Mayflower Community Congregational United Church of Christ has been transformed by opportunities to walk beside and learn from immigrants who have come to our church, who live in our neighborhoods and who we have met at the border. We covenant with God and each other to continue to seek out, welcome and deepen relationships with our immigrant brothers and sisters and to work together with them to see that immigrant justice is done.

The following is supportive to the above covenant.

Resources from the Scriptures

Leviticus 19:33b-34 (Jewish and Christian traditions)

The immigrant who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the immigrant as you love yourself for you were an immigrant in the land of Egypt.

Surah 4:36 (Quran, Muslim Tradition)

Do good unto your parents, and near of kin, and unto orphans, and the needy, and the neighbor from among your own peoples, and the neighbor who is a stranger, and the friend by your side, and the wayfarer and your servant.

Some Things We Can Continue to Do

1. Pray for immigrants, that just laws are passed that will support immigrants, such as a driver's license for all
2. Continue to learn about the root causes of migration
3. Speak out against injustices that immigrants face such as exploitive labor policies
4. Support congregations where immigrants facing unfair deportation are in sanctuary.
5. Invite immigrants to share their stories here at Mayflower
6. Support local initiatives by immigrants

Robbinsdale United Church of Christ

Robbinsdale UCC did not formally adopt a covenant. However, after specific self-preparation and discernment, they did formally declare themselves a sanctuary congregation. The declaration has many elements one can find in a covenant. It is specific, prophetic and

extravagant in its commitment to an immigrant family that might need sanctuary. It has theology, and it has “feet”:

As a community of faith, Robbinsdale United Church of Christ is committed to opening our doors to an immigrant family in need of sanctuary. We are open to this call at any time, day or night. We will do what the U.S. Congress has refused to do: protect immigrants from an immigration system that is separating families and deporting people who are woven into the fabric of their communities and congregations. This means that when we hear about this need, we would provide shelter, meals, and other basic needs. It may be for one day or, in rare events, a year. In any case, the more we sacrifice with this family, the more we learn about the capacity of God’s love and our hospitality. We can only do this with the support of the congregation, the wider church, and the open-hearted space of the Holy Spirit.

We also thank our partners in the Minnesota Conference UCC and the National Setting of the UCC who are willing to provide resources if, and when, a family came to need our congregation. **When we hear the cries of the people, we open ourselves up to the sacrifice and love that comes with living our Gospel message.**

The I Team looks forward to supporting you on this important journey as together we seek to be the beloved community.

Document Revision History

Date	Author/s	Revisions
5/14/2016	Nathan Syverson Diane Haines	Initial draft taken from document of same title from the South West Conference found on the UCC Justice and Witness Immigration Page.

5/19/2016. Additions made to book list

2/13/2017 film added, updated info on CWF and film introduction. Diane Haines