

## Welcoming the Migrant in our Midst

**Whereas**, the state of Tennessee is home to more than 322,000 immigrants\*, 947,320 in Virginia are immigrants\* and 970,979 Georgians are foreign-born\* and these are individuals and families who have migrated to these states seeking safety, security, prosperity; and

**Whereas**, immigrants and refugees sit in the pews and are behind the pulpits in Holston Conference's United Methodist Churches, provide the seasonal and temporary agricultural workforce, and labor in many different occupations such as construction, food service managers, housekeepers, and others; and

**Whereas**, we understand so well that we have benefited from their leadership and their presence and have seen their strong and faithful witness to Christ: and

**Whereas**, Our Social Principles states that "we recognize, embrace, and affirm all persons, regardless of country of origin, as members of the family of God." (*United Methodist Book of Discipline*, III. The Social Community ¶162 H Rights of Immigrants); and

**Whereas**, we are all connected to one another through Christ and are reminded by Paul that when "one part suffers, all the parts suffer" (1 Corinthians 12:26). and because we are all united in Christ, we are called to love our brothers and sisters, without fear of boundaries or barriers; and

**Whereas**, Jesus, a refugee, fully identifies with the migrant and tells us that to welcome the stranger is to welcome Jesus himself. (Matthew 25: 35) Jesus teaches us to show love and compassion for the poor and oppressed who come to this country seeking survival and hope; and

**Whereas**, Bishop Bruce Ough, the president of the UMC Council of Bishops calls upon all of us as members, "to see the face of Christ in the refugee";

**Therefore be it resolved** that the Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church, as followers of Jesus, commit ourselves to work to eliminate racism and violence directed toward newly arriving migrants from all parts of the world.

**Be it further resolved** that the Holston Conference of The United Methodist Church, as followers of Jesus, express our opposition to any immigration policy that excludes refugees solely on the basis of their religion or national origin;

**Be it further resolved** that we advocate for the formation of a conference immigration task force which would help provide guidance to churches seeking to be in ministry to immigrants in Holston Conference, and we celebrate our Rapid Response Team and our Hispanic Ministry Team.

**Be it further resolved** that the Holston Conference calls upon each church to engage and educate its members on the issue of immigration, immigration reform and ways to welcome the immigrant;

**Be it further resolved** that the Holston Conference calls upon our political leaders and policy makers to assure our laws affirm the dignity, worth, inherent values and rights of immigrants.

There is no financial impact to the Holston Conference for adopting this resolution.

Respectfully submitted,

The Holston Conference Hispanic Ministry Justice and Advocacy (subteam)

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\*information from the American Immigration Council

**Adopted by the Holston Annual Conference**

**June 12, 2017**

**Lake Junaluska, N.C.**