

PRESBYTERIAN--NEW ENGLAND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y.

*Covenant of WELCOME to Immigrants*

Committed to “WELCOME people of diverse backgrounds and experiences,” as affirmed in the Statement of Purpose of the Presbyterian—New England Congregational Church, we hereby further affirm that we WELCOME immigrants in our church, our local community and our nation. God commands, “The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you” (Lev 19:34). Jesus, whose family sought sanctuary in another country to flee violence in their homeland, teaches, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:39). Our neighbor is whoever is present among us, regardless of national origin or present circumstances.

In accordance with these sacred principles, we hereby covenant:

- To extend our hearts and hands in WELCOME to our immigrant neighbors, seeking understanding, showing compassion, and respecting their leadership in addressing their needs and securing their rights.
- To provide education to assist immigrants in establishing their homes in our community and to assist the broader community in learning about the experiences of immigrants.
- To advocate with religious leaders, public officials and civic organizations to remove policies that unjustly discriminate against immigrants and to promote coordinated efforts that will ensure WELCOME.
- To accompany immigrants, upon their request, in their dealing with government agencies and to assist them in obtaining appropriate legal counsel and translation services.
- To offer immigrants material support (food, clothing, shelter, childcare, transportation, etc.) where there is need and desire for such assistance.
- To offer sanctuary in cases of extreme need, when temporary residence on church property and the collective voice of the congregation may be necessary in assisting an immigrant to receive a stay of removal, order of supervision or some other form of administrative relief from immigration authorities.
- To remember our immigrant neighbors in prayer and worship, trusting that God’s justice and mercy will give them hope and guide the actions of all who are in relationship with them.

In the words of the “Covenant for Inclusiveness” adopted by this congregation in 1995, we pray once again: “May the message of God’s inclusive love thus be heard and felt within and outside this church.”

*Approved by vote of the congregation May 21, 2017*

*Affirmed by vote of the Governing Board (Session) June 5, 2017*