

HISTORY OF PNECC MISSION in support of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers:

POLICY

Peace and Justice declaration (2010) describes "The Call To Peace and Justice Ministry" with reference to Scripture-- "Love God, love one another; love your enemies" (Matthew 22:37; Matthew 5:43)—and elaborates: "Based on enduring Christian principles, we seek to effect changes to meet the challenges arising from the costs and consequences of war, from persistent poverty, racism, exclusion and repression, and from massive degradation of the environment." [SCC note: the present immigration/refugee crisis arises from all of these causes.]

Global Mission Church covenant (2012) declares that PNECC "SEEKS JUSTICE for the 'least of these' [Matt 25:40] in the international community" (*Global Mission Church Covenant Statement* [Disciples and UCC]). Recognizing points of intersection between global and local mission, the *Be a Global Mission Church* booklet (Disciples and UCC) asks, "When has our church resettled refugees or reached out to international students?"

GOVERNING BOARD STATEMENTS

March 2011: in protest of the House Committee on Homeland Security hearings titled "The Extent of Radicalization in the American Muslim Community and that Community's Response."

April 2016: in opposition to H.R.4731 the "Refugee Program Integrity Restoration Act" [which would have banned acceptance of any Syrian refugees].

January 2017: in support of continuing "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival" immigration policy (DACA).

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND SUPPORT

Muslim new immigrant community

In 2010 and 2011, PNECC, Temple Sinai and the Ahmadiyya Muslim community sponsored a fundraiser and interfaith dinner raising over \$3,000 to purchase Shelter Boxes for worldwide disaster relief. The Ahmadiyya Muslims have also participated in PNECC Peace Fairs.

In March 2011 "Today I Am a Muslim" t-shirts were made available to interested members of the congregation in conjunction with the Governing Board statement protesting House Committee on Homeland Security hearings targeting American Muslims (see above).

In June 2016 signs were displayed on PNECC property wishing our Muslim neighbors a "Blessed Ramadan."

On December 1, 2016, SCC organized a candlelight vigil as witness of interfaith community support at the Al-Hidaya Islamic Community Center in Latham.

Latino immigrants and migrant workers

The EOC Soup Kitchen, hosted at PNECC, serves many Latino workers and families. ESL classes are also hosted in church facilities.

PNECC partners with the First Presbyterian Church, Ballston Spa, in sponsoring a summer camp program for children of racetrack backstretch workers.

Through mission funds contributed to Albany Presbytery, PNECC indirectly supports New York State Rural and Migrant Ministry, an interfaith organization.

LGBT Asylum

On June 28, 2014, LGBT Asylum was the subject of a “Moment for Mission” during worship service. 15 people signed up to be included in an email list to pursue further work on this topic.

Since 2014, SCC has worked with the LGBT Asylum Support Task Force, based at the Hadwen Park Church (UCC), in Worcester, MA. Members of the Task Force participated in PNECC Peace Fair in 2014 and 2016. The BOA (Being Open and Affirming) subcommittee of SCC is currently working with the Task Force to plan a series of programs at PNECC in fall 2016.

Refugees

Although the congregation voted in 1984 not to become a Sanctuary Church, the refugee crisis at that time continued to be a matter of concern. In 1985 PNECC contributed to the Sanctuary Defense Fund, and in 1986 several PNECC families hosted overnight stay for immigrants on their way legally to Canada as part of an “Overground Railroad Program.”

On December 13, 2015, the refugee crisis was the subject of a “Moment for Mission” during worship service. 28 people signed up to be included in an email list to pursue further work on this topic.

On January 21, 2016, a meeting on the Syrian refugee crisis held at Keene Valley Congregational Church was attended by 6 PNECC members and 3 international Skidmore students. In February 2016, GB signed on to support Keene Valley Congregational Church’s grant application to a local foundation for assistance in hiring part time staff to work on refugee resettlement.

On January 30, 2016, PNECC members participated in an Albany Presbytery teach-in about the refugee crisis with representatives of the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants based in Albany.

On January 29, 2017, PNECC co-sponsored a program at Temple Sinai with representatives of the Capital Region Refugee Roundtable.

NOTE: Each area of community outreach listed above was represented on the panel at the community forum, “Uniting Communities Against the Politics of Hate,” held at PNECC on February 19, 2017.