

New Business #2
RESOLUTION TOPIC:

Affirming and Supporting the Work of Immigrant, Asylee, and Refugee Resettlement Organizations

What is the financial impact of this resolution on the budget of our Synod?

None

What are the sources of income anticipated to accomplish the resolution's purpose?

None

What are the personnel implications within our Synod or Churchwide?

Limited promotional support from the bishop

Who will be responsible for implementation of the resolution?

The Rev. Charles Hubbard and the NT-NL Public Witness Team

How does this resolution enhance the mission of the Church and our Synod?

It affirms and could enhance the church's collegial work with resettlement organizations in caring for the unknown neighbor in need.

THE RESOLUTION:

Affirming and Supporting the Work of Immigrant, Asylee, and Refugee Resettlement Organizations

WHEREAS, Jesus said we would see him in the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and the prisoner (Matthew 25:31-40); and

WHEREAS, many immigrants from the Central and South Americas are fleeing violence and many refugees from the Middle East abandon their homes because of war and terror; and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran church over the past 75 years has been a leader in refugee resettlement through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, Lutheran Community (Family) Service and thousands of congregations; and

WHEREAS after World War II one in six Lutherans in the world was a refugee or displaced person, Lutherans and the Lutheran church in this country with the participation of 6,000 congregations resettled 57,000 refugees in the United States; and after the fall of Saigon in 1975 Lutheran congregations sponsored over 50,000 refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos (see ELCA, "A Message on Immigration," 1998, pp. 2-3); and

WHEREAS today millions of sisters and brothers from Central and South America are living in the shadows while contributing their many gifts and talents to the economy and the wonderful diversity of this nation*; and

WHEREAS the ELCA Social Statement from 1998 proclaims, "We draw on the best of our nation's traditions as a refuge and haven for the persecuted and destitute when we affirm that we support a generous policy of welcome for refugees and immigrants, and that we will

advocate for just immigration policies including fairness in visa regulations and in admitting and protecting refugees" (ELCA, "A Message on Immigration", p. 6); and

WHEREAS, Romans 15:7 admonishes us to "welcome one another, just as Christ has welcomed you to the glory of God" and Hebrews 13:2 exclaims, "In exercising hospitality to the stranger many testified that they received more than they gave as if they had welcomed angels without knowing it"; and

WHEREAS, Mary, Joseph and Jesus were refugees fleeing to Egypt to avoid Herod's violence (Matthew 2:13); therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the 2017 Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod in Assembly affirms and commends the crucial work of the Lutheran World Federation, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, and Refugee Services of Texas and encourages the participation of NT-NL congregations in the activities of Refugee Services of Texas, including volunteering, awareness-raising, and advocacy.

**U.S. unauthorized immigrant population is estimated at 11 million persons; see "Overall Number of U.S. Unauthorized Immigrants Holds Steady Since 2009: Decline in share from Mexico mostly offset by growth from Asia, Central America and sub-Saharan Africa," Pew Research Center, Hispanic Trends, September, 2016.*

PRESENTER OF THE RESOLUTION:

The Rev. Franz Schemmel; co-sponsors: David Buland, Criss Forshay, Ann Hafften, Mederick H. Rodgers, Jorge A. Martinez, Sandra Walker, Sabrina Walker, Laura Hunt, Gail Johnson, Tyna Oslie, Sarah Skinner, Len Avecilla, Lissy Bethmann, Carol Otterstad, Berta McLemore, the Rev. Doris Harris, the Rev. Janice Heidlberger, the Rev. Suzanne Guinn, the Rev. Edy Santos, the Rev. Chuck Hubbard

CONGREGATION:

Messiah Lutheran Church

LOCATION:

Weatherford, TX

Recommendation of the committee for Reference & Counsel:

That this resolution be adopted with editorial changes as noted.