

A Statement from the Young Memorial Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church Session Regarding Immigration and Refugee Crises – July 8, 2018

In light of efforts by the United States government to secure the nation's borders and the challenges that have arisen from those entering the country legally, illegally, or seeking asylum, the Session of Young Memorial acknowledges that addressing such challenges is complex given the sheer volume of people, languages, and cultures involved, and that Christian liberty allows us as Christians to hold differing viewpoints as to our government's role in such crises. Nevertheless, the Session affirms that:

- all persons are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26, 27) and deserving of respectful treatment;
- violations against fellow human beings should be condemned by all people;
- policies that separate families and punish those seeking asylum create unnecessary hardships, particularly for children and minors involved;
- given that God has shown us mercy and throughout the Scriptures is compassionate to the vulnerable outsider, God charges us to be merciful as well. Jesus makes our treatment of "the least of these" a critical focus of our final judgment (Matt. 25:31-46);
- the Christian Church, then, should be visible and raise up its voice when the weak, vulnerable, and those fleeing oppression are treated without compassion; and,
- while the US government is constitutionally-mandated to maintain law and order, protecting our citizens and fostering peace, partisan discourse should not in any way blind us to the need to care for the stranger or foreigner within our bounds.

Therefore, the Session encourages:

- individuals so led to communicate with government officials their concern regarding immigrant family separation and the absence of a plan to restore families quickly;
- elected officials to stop divisive rhetoric and finger-pointing and to engage instead in finding productive and humane solutions for caring for immigrants and their families;
- all people of faith to pray for our elected officials that God would give them wisdom to enact laws that promote justice for all people and that such laws would be carried out with a moral consciousness grounded in God's Word and shaped by diligent prayer;
- all people of faith to pray for those affected by policies and procedures that tear families apart, treat fellow human beings in harsh, demeaning ways, and deny due process;
- individuals so led to contribute financially to responsible organizations providing care for immigrants and their families, and legal counsel when needed; and,
- prayer that God will lead each of us to examine the hardness of our own hearts and, in repentance, show us helpful ways we can act positively on behalf of those who suffer, to the end that all might glorify God as Redeemer and Lord.

Note: In offering this statement, the Session acknowledges with gratitude those within our congregation who have been stirred to action and prayer related to the recent events on our national borders.