

Dear Honorable Members of the United States Congress,

As religious leaders from a variety of backgrounds, we are called by our sacred texts and faith traditions to love our neighbor, accompany the vulnerable, and welcome the sojourner. War, conflict and persecution have forced people to leave their homes, creating more refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people than at any other time in history. According to a recent United Nations report, 60 million people are currently displaced – 1 in every 122 people on earth.

This nation has an urgent moral responsibility to receive refugees and asylum seekers who are in dire need of safety. Today, with more than four million Syrian refugees fleeing violence and persecution and over 250,000 Syrian deaths, the United States has an ethical obligation as a world leader to reduce this suffering and generously welcome Syrian refugees into our country. We call on the Obama Administration, the U.S. Congress and Governors of all states to demonstrate moral leadership and affirm their support for the resettlement of Syrian refugees to the United States. This nation has a rich history as a leader in refugee resettlement, with significant precedent, including after World War II and after the fall of Saigon, when we resettled hundreds of thousands of refugees.

In the wake of recent terrorist attacks in Paris, Beirut and Baghdad, many U.S. Governors and Members of Congress are calling to stop any Syrian refugees from resettling to the United States. It is important to recognize that the United States has the most rigorous refugee screening process in the world, including biometric checks, medical screenings, forensic testing of documents, DNA testing for family reunification cases, and in-person interviews with Department of Homeland Security officials. In the face of violence, we can and must show moral courage and increase welcome for individuals fleeing persecution.

The U.S. Refugee Resettlement program has been and should remain open to those of any religious tradition who face persecution on account of the reasons enumerated under U.S. law. We oppose any legislation or proposal that would prevent Syrian refugees or individuals who practice Islam and other faiths from accessing the U.S. refugee resettlement program. Proposals that would have the U.S. State Department disqualify refugees from protection based on their nationality or religion fly in the face of the very principles this nation was built upon, contradict the legacy of leadership our country has historically demonstrated, and dishonor our shared humanity.

As the United States joins the world in seeking ways to meaningfully respond to the Syrian refugee crisis, it is paramount that the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program stay true to its mandate to resettle the most vulnerable. Vulnerable individuals from a host of religions, ethnicities and backgrounds have been and should continue to be resettled in the United States.

Together, representing our various faiths, we decry derogatory language that has been used about Syrian refugees and our Muslim friends and neighbors. Inflammatory rhetoric has no place in our response to this humanitarian crisis. We ask our elected officials and candidates for office to recognize that new Americans of all faiths and backgrounds contribute to our economy, our community, and our congregations. Refugees are an asset to this country. They are powerful ambassadors of the American Dream and our nation's founding principles of equal opportunity, religious freedom, and liberty and justice for all.

As people of faith, our values call us to welcome the stranger, love our neighbor, and stand with the vulnerable, regardless of their religion. We pray that in your discernment, compassion for the plight of refugees will touch your hearts. We urge you to be bold in choosing moral, just policies that provide refuge for vulnerable individuals seeking protection.

Sincerely,

National and International Leaders

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Rev. Grady Parsons, Stated Clerk, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

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Dr. Steve Timmermans, Executive Director, Christian Reformed Church in North America
Stanley J. Noffsinger, General Secretary, Church of the Brethren
Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins, General Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada
Jonathan Greenblatt, National Director, Anti-Defamation League
William Bernstein, Executive Director, Jewish World Watch
Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner, Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism and Senior Vice President, Union for Reform Judaism
Mark Hetfield, President & CEO, HIAS
Nancy K. Kaufman, CEO, National Council of Jewish Women
Debbie Hoffmann, President, National Council of Jewish Women
Rabbi Jill Jacobs, T'ruah: the Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
Jim Winkler, President, National Council of Churches
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Rev. Dr. Earl D. Trent Jr. Chairman of the Board of Directors Church World Service
Linda Hartke, President and CEO, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Stephan Bauman, President, World Relief
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Diane Randall, Executive Secretary, Friends Committee on National Legislation
Anwar A. Khan, CEO, Islamic Relief USA
Salam Al-Marayati, President, Muslim Public Affairs Council
Sayeed Siddiqui, President, Muslim Youth of North America
Catherine Orsborn, Director, Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign
Atiya Aftab, Esq., Co-founder and Chair, Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom
Scott Wright, Director, Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach, U.S. Region, Missionary Society of St. Columban
Rev. Fr. Antonio Ponce OMI, Director - Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate-Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation
Rev. Susan Taylor, National Public Affairs Director, Church of Scientology National Affairs Office
Rev. John Guttermann, Lead, Conversations With Friends
Rev. Dr. William Schulz, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
UNITED SIKHS
Rabbi Jennie Rosenn, Vice President of Community Engagement, HIAS
Rabbi Rachel Grant Meyer, Educator, Community Engagement, HIAS
Nathan Hosler, Director, Office of Public Witness, Church of the Brethren
Sandra Sorensen, Director, Washington Office, United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries

Colin Watson, Director of Ministries and Administration, Christian Reformed Church in North America
Rev. Leah C. M. Lonsbury, Clergy Care Specialist, The Alliance of Baptists
Rev. Paula Clayton Dempsey, Director of Partnership Relations, Alliance of Baptists
Rev. Ronald J. Degges, President, Disciples Home Missions
Rev. Ken Brooker-Langston, Director, Disciples Center for Public Witness
Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Director, Refugee & Immigration Ministries, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Dr. Peter Makari, Executive, Middle East and Europe, Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ
Rev. Dr. James Moos, Co-Executive, Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ
Rev. Julia Brown Karimu, Co-Executive, Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ
Carol Blythe, Past President, Alliance of Baptists
Rev. Aundrea Alexander, Esq, Associate General Secretary for Action and Advocacy for Justice and Peace, National Council of Churches
Rev. Barbara L. Carter, Interfaith and Ecumenical Officer, Community of Christ
Marie Dennis, Co-President, Pax Christi International
Mr. Armando Borja, Regional Director, Jesuit Refugee Service North America
Sr. Jeanine Retzer, Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother United States/Caribbean Province
Rev. Michael-Ray Mathews, Director of Clergy Organizing, PICO National Network
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Charlotte Haberaecker, President & CEO, Lutheran Services in America
Carol Bremer-Bennett, U.S. Director of World Renew
Dalit Baum, The American Friends Service Committee
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Rev. LeDayne McLeese Polaski, Executive Director, Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, Bautistas por la Paz
Rev. Michael Neuroth, Policy Advocate for International Issues
Sister Donna Preston, OSF, Coordinator of Justice & Peace Team, School Sisters of St. Francis, U.S. Province
The Rev. Roger R. Gustafson, Bishop, Central States Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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Sister Patricia A. Lowery, MMS, MD, Coordinator, Medical Mission Sisters
Sister Catherine Waldron, SNDdeN, United States East-West Province of the Sisters of Notre Dame Leadership Team
Rev. Mary E. Jacobs, Co-Moderator, Disciples Peace Fellowship, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Rev. Denise Turner, International Disciples Women's Ministries Executive Council Member
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Rabbi Amy Eilberg, College of Saint Benedict and St. John's Univeristy
Sister Joan O'Sullivan, Provincial Leader of Union of Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary US Unit
Rev. Leah Grundset Davis, Alliance of Baptists
Sister Margaret Bulmer, Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Houston Office of Social Concerns

Kathlyn Mulcahy, OP, Dominican Sisters of Springfield
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Sr. Ann Oestreich, IHM, U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking
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Rev. Marjorie E. Palmer, retired UM pastor
John P. Mobley, Regional Minister, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Alabama-Northwest Florida
Rev. Angie Wright, Greater Birmingham Ministries

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Rev. Dr. Phil Campbell, Pastor, Northern Light United Church, and John Wesley Iloff Senior Adjunct
Lecturer in Ministry and Social Justice, Iloff School of Theology

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Rev. Sherry Brady, United Methodist Church
Don Benton, Pastor, Scottsdale United Methodist Church
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Grace Bunker, Casas Adobes Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
Lori Tapia, Pastor, Disciples of Christ Iglesia Alas de Salvacion Gilbert, Arizona
Rev. Ailsa Guardiola Gonazlez, Pastor, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Tucson
Rev. Kathleen Day, United Christian Ministry at Northern Arizona University
Rev. Lori Tapia, Pastor, Iglesia Alas de Salvacion, Gilbert, AZ., Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Rev. Ken Heintzelman, Senior Minister, Shadow Rock United Church of Christ
Adam Estle, Executive Director, Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding
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Rev. Diane Weible, Conference Minister, Northern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ

Rev. Dr. Rick Schlosser, Executive Director and CEO, California Council of Churches/IMPACT

Imam Seyed Ali Ghazvini, the Islamic Cultural Center of Fresno, CA

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E. Stephen Voss, President, International Institute of Los Angeles

Rev. Donald P. Lee, First United Methodist Church

Rev. Dr. Amy Aitken, California Heights United Methodist Church

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The Rev. Mark W. Holmerud, Bishop, Sierra Pacific Synod, ELCA, Sacramento, CA

Rev. David K. Farley, Director of Justice & Compassion Ministries, United Methodist Church, Cal-Pac Conference

Rev. Sunyoung Lee, Point Loma United Methodist Church, South District, California-Pacific Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church

Rev. Randa D'Aoust, Pastor United Methodist Church California-Pacific Annual Conference

Rev. Nancy Goyings, Pastor, United Methodist Church, California-Pacific Annual Conference

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Rev. Eve B. MacMaster, Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Gainesville

Rev. Dr. Robert K. Carpenter, Retired Pastor, American Baptist Churches, USA

Imam Abdurrahman Sykes, President, Islamic Society Leading American Muslims (I.S.L.A.M. Inc.), Winter Park, Florida

Rev. Taka Ishii, New York Annual Conference

Bishop Robert G. Schaefer, Florida-Bahamas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Becky Dees-McMahon
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Rev. Dr. Margaret Ann Crain, Professor Emeritus, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
Rev. Sherry Scates, Minister of Faith Formation, Plainfield United Methodist Church, Plainfield, IL
Stephen F. Jackson, Coordinator, Interfaith Action Committee for Economic Justice, Joliet, IL
Rabbi Seth M. Limmer, Chicago Sinai Congregation
Rabbi Maralee Gordon, Crystal Lake, IL
Laura Foerster, RN, BSN, JD, Justice & Witness Team Member, Illinois South Conference, United Church of Christ, Highland, IL
Rev. Alka Lyall, Broadway United Methodist Church
Connie Sinn, Elder, First Christian Church Disciples of Christ, Peoria, Illinois
Sister. Rose Mary Meyer, Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary
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Rev. Dr. E. Byron Anderson, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, IL
Rev. Chris Walters, Board of Directors, Northern Illinois Justice for Our Neighbors
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Dr. Mazen Kudaimi, President, Illiana Islamic Association, Highland
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Deaconess Carleen Miller, ELCA Indianapolis, IN

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Bishop Michael Rinehart, TX-LA Gulf Coast Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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Rev. Lane Cotton Winn, Pearl River United Methodist Church
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Rev. Dr. Roderick J. Miller, Senior Pastor, Towson United Methodist Church, Towson, Maryland
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Abdul Cader Asmal MD PhD FRCP, Past President of the Islamic Center of Boston, Past President of the Islamic Council of New England, Co-chair of Communications Islamic Council
Rev. Tom Macaulay, Retired United Methodist Pastor

Michigan

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The Rev. J. Douglas Paterson, Ann Arbor First United Methodist Church
Dr. Rouzana Hares DDS FAGD, President Board of Director. The Unity Center of Bloomfield Hills
Rev. Robert D. Schoenhals, Pastor, First United Methodist Church of Ferndale
Rev. Suzanne Walls, Beverly Hills United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Alfred T. Bamsey, Retired UMC pastor, Consultant, and Mentor
Daniel Phillips, University of Michigan
Pastor Dale Milford, Waterford Four Towns United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Sid L Mohn, ofef, United Church of Christ
Rev. Paul Perez, Director of Mission and Justice Engagement & Leadership Recruitment, The Detroit Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church
Rev. Elizabeth A. Hill
The Rev. George Covintree, Chairperson, Board of Justice, Advocacy, and Equity, Detroit Annual Conference, UMC
Sr. Mary Jane Herb, IHM, President, IHM Sisters Monroe, Michigan
The Rev. Craig Alan Satterlee, Ph.D., Bishop, North West Lower Michigan Synod ELCA
Bishop Donald P. Kreiss, Southeast Michigan Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Rev. Mollie Clements, Retired United Methodist Pastor
Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel, Detroit Conference, United Methodist Church
Fahd Al-Saghir, M.D, Chair of the Boar of Trustees, Muslim Unity Center

Minnesota

Pastor Robert Munneke, Chair, Immigration, Refugee and Asylum Seekers Justice, NE MN Synod - ELCA
Dr. Ron Pagnucco, Chair of the Board, Central Minnesota Community Empowerment Organization
Rev. Debra Jene Collum, Pastor Chatfield UMC, Chatfield MN
Bishop Thomas M. Aitken, Evangelical Lutheran church in America, Northeastern MN Synod
Rev. Adam Blons, Senior Minister at Macalester Plymouth United Church, St. Paul, MN
Connie Lacher, OFS
Rev. Robert Munneke, Immigration Task Force for NE MN Synod of ELCA
Rev. Debra Jene Collum, pastor Chatfield United Methodist Church, Chatfield, MN
Rev. John R. Guttermann, Covenant Minister United Church of Christ New Brighton - Lead Organizer Conversations With Friends (visiting, supporting, and advocating for people detained by ICE)
Rev. Carissa Lick, Deacon in Minnesota Annual Conference
Rev. Jean E. Rollin, United Methodist Church, Common Ground: A United Methodist Community, Cambridge, MN
Rev. Suzanne Mades, United Methodist
Rabbi Amy Eilberg, College of Saint Benedict
Reverend Shari Prestemon, Conference Minister of MN Conference United Church of Christ
Diane M. Haines, Chair MN Conference UCC Immigration Team
Rev. Steven H Delzer, Bishop of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
Bishop Ann Svennungsen, Minneapolis Area Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Bishop Jon V. Anderson, Southwestern MN Synod ELCA
Bishop Bruce R. Ough, The United Methodist Church, Dakotas-Minnesota Episcopal Area

Mississippi

Rev. Paige Swaim-Presley, Mississippi Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church

Rev. Justin White, Senior Pastor Greenville FUMC, MS.
Clay F. Lee, Bishop, Retired, The United Methodist Church

Missouri

The Very Rev. Mike Kinman, Dean, Christ Church Cathedral (Episcopal)
Sr. Carol Orf, Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, MO
Rev. Kendra Nolde, Gethsemane Lutheran Church
Rev. Cynthia S. Bumb, United Church of Christ, St. Louis, MO
Sister Marie Orf, Sister of the Most Precious Blood, O'Fallon, MO
Virginia Jaskiewicz, CPPS Sister of the Most Precious Blood
Rev. Harold Johnson, Restorative Justice Coordinator, Missouri Conference of The United Methodist Church
Director of Beyond the Fences-Ministries of Restorative Justice
Sr. Rita Ann Bregenhorn, OSU, Ursulines of the Roman Union, Central Province
Maharat Rori Picker Neiss, Executive Director, Jewish Community Relations Council of St. Louis

Montana

Rev. Dr. Charles J. Alkula, Stevensville United Methodist Church
Bishop Jessica Crist, Montana Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Chair of the ELCA Conference of Bishops

Nebraska

Rev. Teresa Hufford
United Methodist Pastor retired . James S. Brewer
Rev. Richard O. Randolph, Ph.D., Senior Pastor, Christ United Methodist Church
The Very Reverend Craig Loya, Dean, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Omaha, Nebraska
The Rev. Canon Judi A. Yeates, The Episcopal Church, Diocese of Nebraska
Rev. Susanna DesMarais, Pastor, Episcopal Church of the Holy Trinity Lincoln, Nebraska
Rev. Kim E. Roberts, Priest in Charge, St. Martin of Tours Episcopal Church, Omaha, NE
Rev. Jamie Norwich McLennan, First United Methodist Church
Bishop Brian Maas, Nebraska Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

New Jersey

Rev. David Wiley
Rev. Dr. Bradford L. Motta, Senior Pastor Morrow Memorial Church, Maplewood, NJ
Shivonne C. McKay, Pastor, Galilee United Methodist Church, Greater New Jersey Conference
Bishop John Schol, The United Methodist Church, Greater New Jersey
Bishop Tracie L. Bartholomew, New Jersey Synod ELCA
Rev. Dr. Debra L. Duke, Vice Moderator, Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ and Senior Pastor, The Community Church of Mountain Lakes
Rev. Patricia Wentworth, First United Methodist church of Mount Ephraim

New Mexico

Bro. Mark Schroeder, O.F.M., Animator, Franciscans for Justice
Rev. Nancy M. Wilson, Retired Pastor, United Methodist Church

New York

Bishop Jane Allen Middleton, Regional Bishop, New York Annual Conference, White Plains, NY
Rev. Jeffrey B. Childs, pastor of the Penn Yan United Methodist Church
Prof. Faroque A Khan-Member Board of Trustees of Islamic Center of Long Island, Westbury, New York
The Rev. Stefanie L. Bennett, Pastor, First United Methodist Church, Amityville, New York
Rev. Doris K. Dalton, Executive Director, Westchester Martin Luther King, Jr. Institute for Nonviolence
Sister Donna McGartland, OSF, Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities
Rev. Dr. Gary E. Doupe, UM pastor, retired
Rev. Luis-Alfredo Cartagena Zayas, Associate Pastor for Outreach, Park Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) & United Church of Christ

Rt. Rev. Michael Potvin-Frost, Transformational Catholic Church, St. Francis of Assisi Ministry
Bishop F. Herbert Skeete, Rtd. United Methodist Church
Bishop Jane Allen Middleton, The United Methodist Church, New York Area
Rev. Brooke Newell, Director of Social Witness, NY State Council of Churches
Rev. John Stanley Macholz, Bishop, Upstate New York Synod-Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
Rev. Hector Laporta, Fourth Avenue United Methodist Church, Brooklyn, New York
Rev. Jeff Wells, The Church of the Village, New York City
Jane Finnerty, Ursulines of the Eastern Province of the United States
Rev. Paul A. Fleck, Pastor, Hamden Plains United Methodist Church, Chair, New York Annual
Conference Board of Church & Society
Rev. Matt Curry, Director of Connectional Ministries
The Rev. Merle Showers, The United Methodist Church, Upper New York

North Carolina

Rev. William R. Garrard, Jr., Retired United Methodist Clergy
Rev. Michael Elliott, United Methodist Pastor
Rev. Jonathan Gaylord, Providence United Methodist Church, Marion, North Carolina, Western North
Carolina Annual Conference, United Methodist Church
Rev. Paul Brown, Senior Pastor, Canton Central United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Nancy Carol Stahl, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) pastor, Montagnard Relations,
Coordinator for First Christian Church, Charlotte, Chair of Anti-Racism Pro-Reconciliation
Commission in North Carolina
Rev. Wil Posey, Pastor, First United Methodist Church, Hickory, NC
Bishop Hope Morgan Ward, The United Methodist Church, North Carolina Conference
Sister Rose Marie Tresp, Director of Justice, Sisters of Mercy South Central Community
Rev. Dr. Douglas E. Wingeier, Emeritus Professor, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
Bishop Timothy M. Smith, NC Synod of the ELCA
Rev. Lisa N. Yebuah, Edenton Street United Methodist Church Ohio
Bishop C. Joseph Sprague, The United Methodist Church, Ohio
Bishop Gregory Vaughn Palmer, The United Methodist Church, Ohio West Episcopal Area
Rev. Darryl Fairchild, Pastor, Bellbrook United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Julie Carmean, West Ohio Conference, William Street UMC
Rev. Louise R. Seipel, Pastor, Broad Street United Methodist Church, Columbus
Rev. Nestor Nazario, Pastor of Hope UMC
Rev. Thomas B. Mellott, Senior Pastor, First United Methodist Church, Bowling Green
Rev. Mark Reed, Methodist Theological School in Ohio

Ohio

Rev. Darryl Fairchild, Pastor, Bellbrook United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Julie Carmean, West Ohio Conference, William Street UMC
Rev. Louise R. Seipel, Pastor, Broad Street United Methodist Church, Columbus
Rev. Nestor Nazario, Pastor of Hope UMC
Rev. Thomas B. Mellott, Senior Pastor, First United Methodist Church, Bowling Green, Ohio
Rev. Mark Reed, Methodist Theological School in Ohio
Rabbi Sigma Faye Coran, Rockdale Temple, Cincinnati, Ohio
Rev. Dr. Michael D. Castle, President, Alliance of Baptists
Bishop C. Joseph Sprague, The United Methodist Church
Bishop Gregory Vaughn Palmer, The United Methodist Church, Ohio West Episcopal Area
The Rev. Abraham D. Allende, Bishop of the Northeastern Ohio Synod, ELCA
Bishop Suzanne Darcy Dillahunt, Southern Ohio Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church In America

Oklahoma

Bishop Charles N. Crutchfield, The United Methodist Church (Retired)
Dr. B. Gordon Edwards, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Elizabeth Horton-Ware, Pastor & Director of the Welsey Foundation at Southwestern Oklahoma
State University

Oregon

Rev. Timothy F. Winslea, RN, Teaching Elder Montavilla United Methodist Church, Portland OR
Rev. Julia Nielsen, University Park United Methodist Church
Rae Anne Lafrenz, Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice
Rev. Dr. Sally L. Godard, United Church of Christ, Unidos Bridging Community, McMinnville, OR
Bishop Dave Brauer-Rieke, Oregon Synod - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Pennsylvania

Rev. Mark Terwilliger, Pastor, Countryside Community United Methodist Church, Clarks Summit, PA
Nancy J. Shane, retired United Methodist Local Pastor, Christ UMC, Lansdale, PA
Sr. Frances Murray, OSF, Chair - Justice and Peace Committee, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Rev. Matthew C. Staniz, Pastor, St. Luke Lutheran Church, Devon, PA
Rev. Jacob Waybright, United Methodist
Sister Dominica Lo Bianco, OSF
Rev. Bruce Lewandowski, C.Ss.R., Office for Cultural Ministries - Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Sister Colleen Dauerbach SSJ, Social Justice Coordinator, Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Sister Jeanette Bussen, CSJ, Coordinator of Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation Office, Baden, Pennsylvania
Sr. Mary Pellegrino, CSJ, Congregational Moderator, Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden, PA
The Rev. Ryan R. Whitley, Rector, The Nevil Memorial Church of St. George (Episcopal), Ardmore, PA.
Rev. Linda Orsen Theophilus, Emmanuel Lutheran Church of Eastmont, Pittsburgh, PA
Sister Suzanne Susany Sisters Of Saint Francis
The Reverend Sally Jo Snyder, Director of Advocacy and Consumer Engagement
Judith Bernstein-Baker, Executive Director, HIAS Pennsylvania
Sister Anne P. Myers, SSJ, Congregational President, Sisters of Saint Joseph, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia
Bishop Claire S Burkat, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA
Bishop Michael L. Rhyne, Bishop of the Allegheny Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Bishop James S. Dunlop, The Lower Susquehanna Synod Of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Bishop Peggy A. Johnson, The United Methodist Church, Philadelphia Episcopal Area

South Carolina

Bishop (Retired) Kenneth L. Carder, The United Methodist Church
Rev. Wendy Hudson-Jacoby, pastor of North Charleston United Methodist Church
Bishop Herman Yoos, South Carolina Synod, ELCA

South Dakota

Rev. Carissa Lick, Deacon at Parker United Methodist Church and ELL Teacher at Parker School District

Tennessee

Mrs. Beverly E. Job, member of Belmont United Methodist Church, Nashville, Tennessee.
Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Moore, The United Methodist Church, Retired, Greater New Jersey Annual Conference
Rev. Dr. Merrill M. Hawkins, Jr., Pastor, Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church, Morristown District, Holston Conference, Professor of Religion, Carson-Newman University
Rev. Matthew L. Kelley, Chair, Conference Committee on Church and Society, Tennessee Conference of the United Methodist Church
Rev. Ingrid McIntyre, Executive Director, Open Table Nashville
Rev. Charles L. White, Jr., Senior Pastor, Gordon Memorial UMC
Rev. Frits D Haverkamp, Northside Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
The Rev. Thomas A. Momberg, Vicar, Episcopal Church of the Annunciation, Cordova, Tennessee
Rev. Merrilee Wineinger, The United Methodist Church, Tennessee Annual Conference
Rev. Ayanna Watkins, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
H. Julian Gordy, Bishop, ELCA Southeastern Synod
Rev. James E. Cole, Pastor, Antioch United Methodist Church

Texas

Rev. Allen Noah

Rev. Tracey Beadle, Associate Pastor, Manchaca UMC, Manchaca, TX

Rev. Gordon Johnson, Minister of Pastoral Care, New World United Methodist Church, Arlington, TX

Rev. Rusty Teeter, Director, Wesley Foundation of Austin United Methodist Campus Ministry

Pastor Preston W. Weaver, Senior Pastor, Kirkwood United Methodist Church, Irving, Texas

Rev. J. D. Allen, Pastor, First United Methodist Church of Boyd

Cynthia B. Astle, O.S.L., Certified Spiritual Director, Dallas, TX

Rev. Dr. Paul L. Escamilla, Senior Pastor, Saint John's United Methodist Church, Austin, TX

Pastor Hiram "Doc" Jones, The United Methodist Church, Montgomery, TX

Rev. Dr. Carolyn L. Stapleton, Sr. Pastor, First United Methodist Church of Sabinal

Rev. Glenda Whitehead, Journey of Faith United Methodist Church

Rev. Dale Weise, First United Methodist Church, San Angelo, Texas

Dana Lobaugh, Minister of Music and Worship, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Arlington, TX

Kay W. Van Dorn, Vice-Chair, First Christian Church, Lexington, Texas

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Matthew Hudman, Missions Minister, Azle Christian Church (DOC)

Nancy Robbins, Vice Chair, Azle Christian Church

Sister Margaret Bulmer, Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Houston Office of Social Concerns

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Bishop Michael Rinehart, TX-LA Gulf Coast Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Bishop Janice Riggle Huie, The United Methodist Church, Houston Episcopal area.

Vermont

Rev. Leslie D. Tawnamaia

Virginia

Rev. Norma Aguilar, Ramsey Memorial United Methodist Church

Rev. Haley dos Santos, The United Methodist Church, Pleasant View Charge

Rev. Elizabeth Buxton, Pastor, Batesville UMC

Rev. Craig Muffley, Eastland United Methodist Church

Syed Moktadir, Adams Center

Rev. M. Garey Eakes, Silverbrook United Methodist Church, Lorton, VA

Rev. Pete Geoffrion, Glosbrenner United Methodist Church

Rev. Lauren Lobenhofer, Pastor of Gum Spring United Methodist Church

Rev. Andy Brock, Winchester District Churches United Methodist Church

Rev. Leah Grundset Davis, communications specialist, Alliance of Baptists

Rev. Dr. Jonathan Kruschwitz, Gayton Road Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Richmond

Rev. Allie Rosner Bass, Arlington Temple United Methodist Church

Rev. Dr. John D. Copenhaver, Prof. Emeritus of Religion and Philosophy, Shenandoah University

Bishop James F. Mauney, Virginia Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Washington

Rev. Dr. Mary Petrina Boyd, Pastor, Langley United Methodist Church, Langley, Washington

Rev. Christopher Gudger-Raines

Rev. Thomas Quigley, Retired Ecumenical Executive

Rev. Dr. Kathryn A. Morse, Pastor, Vashon United Methodist Church

Rev. Meredith Manning Brown, Lead Pastor, Evergreen United Methodist Church, Lacey, WA

Rev. Richenda Fairhurst, Camas United Methodist Church

The Rev. Kirby Unti, Bishop Northwest Washington Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Rev. Wendy J. Taylor, Spiritual Director

Rev. Michael Denton, Conference Minister of The Pacific Northwest Conference of The United Church of Christ

Bishop Kirby Unti, Northwest Washington Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Rev. Richard E. Jaech, Bishop, Southwestern Washington Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Bishop Martin Wells, Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Washington, D.C.

Rev. Dr. Stephen Gentle, Senior Minister, National City Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),
Washington, D.C.

Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Director, Refugee & Immigration Ministries, Christian Church (Disciples of
Christ)

Rev. Ken Brooker-Langston, Director, Disciples Center for Public Witness

Rabbi Shira Stutman, Sixth & I Historic Synagogue

Rabbi Elizabeth Richman, Jews United for Justice

Wisconsin

Rev Vance Elzinga, faith reformed Church

Very Reverend Philip D. Reifenberg, J.C.L., Pastor, St. Dominic Catholic Church, Sheboygan, WI and
Member, Muslim-Catholic Dialogue in Milwaukee

Rev. Toner O'Connor, Resident Priest Emerita, Milwaukee Zen Center

Rev. Deacon Nancy Lanman, Central United Methodist Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Wisconsin Annual
Conference

Pardeep Kaleka, Sikh Temple of Wisconsin

Rev. PyungAhn Kim, Lead Pastor of Elroy/Wonewoc United Methodist Church, Wisconsin

Rev. Tom Countryman, Portage United Methodist Church, Portage, WI

Sr. Jeanine Retzer, Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother United States/Caribbean Province

Rev. Dr. Dan R. Dick, Assistant to the Bishop, Sun Prairie

Bishop Gerald L Mansholt, East Central Synod of Wisconsin, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Jorge Luis Mayorga, The United Methodist Church

Bishop Jim Arends, La Crosse Area Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Rev. Mary Stumme Froiland, Bishop, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, ELCA

Dr. Waleed S. Najeeb, President SAMS-WI (Syrian American Medical Society- WI chapter)

Sister Jeanne Conzemius, Vice President of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis,
Stevens Point, WI