



## Lighting the Candles: A Journey with Black Migrants

### 7 Sessions for Advent & Epiphany

Including 4 Weeks of Advent, Christmas, Holy Family Feast & Epiphany

**Advent, Week 1:** Encountering Black Migrants in Family Detention

**Advent, Week 2:** Sharing Hope and Community at the Border

**Advent, Week 3:** Seeking Light in Detention Centers

**Advent, Week 4:** Building Peace Amid Deportation Threats

**Christmas:** Celebrating Christ's Arrival & Hope During COVID

**Holy Family Feast:** Linking with Global Journeys of Black Migrants

**Epiphany:** Shining a Path Towards a More Anti-Racist Future

*Each week offers scripture, spiritual reflection & question, stories of black migrants, actions, and a prayer.*

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<http://www.bit.ly/BlackMigrantsJourneys>

*Thanks to all members of the Interfaith Immigration Coalition's  
"Holy Days & Holidays" Team who partnered to develop this resource!*

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*Questions or Comments? Contact: [sstanley@dhm.disciples.org](mailto:sstanley@dhm.disciples.org), Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Team Chair*



## Lighting the Candles: A Journey with Black Migrants

### Advent, Week 1: Encountering Black Migrants in Family Detention

**Scripture:** *We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.... Yet Lord, we are the clay, and You art our potter.”*  
*(Is. 64:6,8)*

#### Reflection:

As we begin today the soul-full season of waiting for the “advent” or “coming” of Christ, the scriptures pull us to a time towards the end of the sixth century when God’s people—exiled for generations in Babylonia—had now been returned through God’s grace to Palestine. Their precious temple had even been rebuilt! Yet despite God’s constant call to them to enact justice and “let the oppressed go free,” they remained a community of “both wheat and tares.” Isaiah offered a confession of how, despite God’s faithfulness, the hearts of many had become corrupted.



IIC faith & community partners outside the national ICE office in Washington, D.C. on July 17th. Photo: Getty Images.

Our society today has likewise been confronting our unrighteousness, inequities, and discrimination; made tragically clearer in these months of pandemic and racial reckoning. A part of our own “polluted” reality is how the 600,000+ black undocumented immigrants in the U.S. report constant traumas enacted by our immigration and carceral systems. Like all Blacks in the U.S., Black immigrants are over-policed, and then often turned over to ICE. The [Black Alliance for Just Immigration](#) or “BAJI” reports that, while Black immigrants are just 7% of the non-citizen population in the U.S., they make up 20% of immigrants fighting deportations—despite any evidence they have committed more crimes. RAICES also [unveils](#) the lengthiest recorded ICE incarcerations are of Black African migrants, and solitary confinement is disproportionately used against African and Caribbean descent immigrants in detention.

Further, the U.S.’s three family detention centers (in Karnes and Dilley, TX and in Berks County, PA) have also shown growth in Black immigrant families. RAICES tracked how 29% of families in Karnes County family detention center between January-March of 2020 were Haitian, and a remarkable 44% of families there since the pandemic have been Haitian. Shockingly, bond amounts have also been set at 54% higher there for Haitian migrants.

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## Advent, Week 1: Encountering Black Migrants in Family Detention

*Continued*

### Question:

***How can we confess our sins towards black immigrants in this season, ask God to re-shape our commitments to grow anti-racism and justice for Black immigrants, and seek freedom of families and individuals from detention now?***

### Stories:

The [Shut Down Berks Coalition](#) shared [this video](#), where Steve Paul of [Haitian American Voice](#) in Philadelphia spoke words of M.N., a Haitian parent detained at the Berks County Detention Center in PA. on June 22, 2020, who pled: “Which prison in this world keeps a 3 year old toddler for no reason or a crime, locked down during this worldwide pandemic?....My baby is here because our lives were in danger. They have no right to keep my baby more than 20 days, but it has been more than 4 months. No judge is helping us....I want someone to hear me. We are in pain.”

Another Haitian mom months before was held in isolation with her three year old son, and [said](#): “I feel so sad because we have to stay in our room all day long. When I want to go outside my room, the staff say on the intercom, ‘The Haitians are coming.’ I feel like I’m being discriminated against...for being Black and Haitian.”

#### **Tell ICE: Don't Deport 28 Children During The Holidays**

Call: 214-918-4822 E-mail:  
Simona.L.Flores@ice.dhs.gov

Sample script: 28 children and their families, who have been detained in immigration jail the entire pandemic, are being fast tracked by ICE for deportation. They are being unfairly denied the right to asylum. Families need to be free and safe instead of being deported to the violence they fled. Do not deport these families, release them to relatives or sponsors.

The latest atrocities now are threats to deport 28 detained children (26 in Dilley/2 at Berks and their parents) during the holidays; denying them due process for their asylum claims. These toddlers and teens have been detained 8-18 months, and should be freed.

### Actions:

- Sign [this petition](#) to ICE, and contact ICE (see left) to #DefendFamilies and ask children be released to relatives or sponsors—and that ***none be deported***.
- Call PA. Representatives Evans, Scanlon, Dean, Houlahan, & Senator Casey at (202) 224-3121 with the same ask. Use this [toolkit](#) for help.
- Join on Dec. 6, 4-5 p.m. Eastern on Facebook [here](#) or [here](#) for a “Caravan of Hope” and vigil of light at Berks detention center in PA. for detained families. Offer prayers of support for the families on the FB livestream. See & share event info. [here](#).
- Call Governor Wolf (717) 787-2500 and urge he #Shut Down Berks. See [here](#).

### Prayer:

*God who chose to enter the world in the form of a child born humbly, as we move towards celebration of your birth this season, help us hold near the children and families on journeys seeking safety in our own world today. Keep us confessing the discrimination in our racist immigration structures, and help us halt pain and instead grow justice. Teach us to act in solidarity for the protection of those seeking security from dangers, and healing from harms. Amen.*

*Writer: Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea-Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries & Assistant: Ellie Hutchison Cervantes-IIC*



## Lighting the Candles: A Journey with Black Migrants

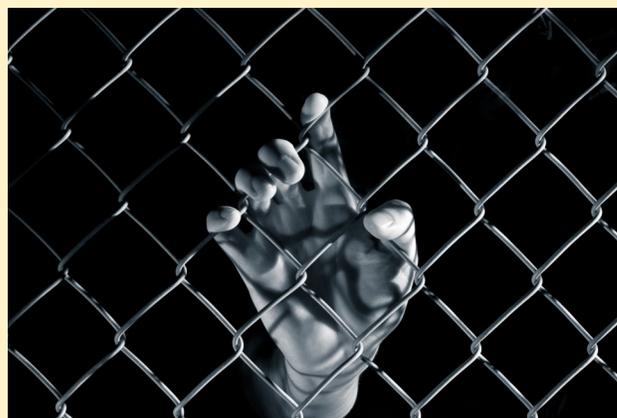
### Advent, Week 2: Sharing Hope and Community at the Border

**Scripture:** “Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her she had served her term.” (Isaiah 40:1)

**Reflection:** The scriptures remind that ours is a God who is ready to offer comfort and care after seasons of struggle. We, as people of God, are sinful. We are sinful in how we relate to creation; we are sinful in how we relate to each other; we are sinful in how we relate to God. We cause suffering and pain. However, God’s grace, love, and comfort are more powerful than our sinful nature. As migrants flee situations exacerbated by sinfulness, God’s comfort is greatly needed as they travel, sometimes over 7 or more countries, before arriving at US borders.

**Question:** *How might you help offer God’s comfort to migrants who are seeking protection from pain and suffering?*

**Story:** This story is about “Danielle,” whose name is changed due to her sensitive and pending asylum case. As civil unrest spiked between 2015 and 2016 in Cameroon, Danielle witnessed her community caught between government forces and succession fighters. Joining student groups to protest the violence, arrests, and torture, she called for a ceasefire and peaceful dialogues between government forces and Anglophone successionists. Soon she became a target of the government.



Arrested and assaulted, she knew she had to flee; flying to South America and walking thousands of miles to request protection from the United States. When exhausted, alone, or afraid while en route, she would call out to God. Once arriving in Tijuana and without Spanish, she experienced extortion, threats, and robbery were common. Fortunately, she traveled with other Cameroonian nationals to create some sense of safety and protection, and church groups and organizations provided support. Danielle and the Cameroonian group waited their turn to present themselves to Customs and Border Protection. Finally, her number was called.

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# Lighting the Candles: A Journey with Black Migrants

## Advent, Week 2: Sharing Hope and Community at the Border

*Continued*

Danielle now encourages immigrant rights groups in the United States to push for an end to the Migrant Protection Protocols/“Remain in Mexico” Program that denies so many their human rights. Read more of her story [here](#).



Photo from Paul Jeffery, ACT, in WCC news [here](#).

### **Actions:**

- In several sites along the U.S.-Mexico border, groups on both sides host monthly #SaveAsylum vigils to witness to the abusive policies of U.S. immigration officials as they blatantly prohibit people from accessing asylum while disregarding international treaties, human rights laws, and U.S. sanctioned law. Learn more at Kino Border Initiative’s website <https://www.saveasylum.org/>, and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/saveasylum>.
- Learn more about the diversity of experiences of Black immigrants at the U.S.-Mexico border from the Black Alliance for Just Immigration’s Report at <http://baji.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/black-lives-at-the-borderfinal-2.pdf>
- Espacio Migrante provides a variety of support for diverse populations in Tijuana. Find out how you can help, by going to <https://www.espaciomigrante.org/>.
- Al Otro Lado offers legal support of many Black immigrants in Tijuana. Find out more at <https://alotrolado.org/>.

### **Prayer:**

Go to <https://bit.ly/CameroonPrayer> to read “A Prayer for Cameroon and the Cameroonian People,” written by Valery Nodem—a Cameroonian national serving as an Associate for International Hunger Concerns with the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Here is an excerpt:

*“Lord our God, we raise our voices to you and pray for your people affected by the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon. Violence in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon over the past few years has left families in mourning, destroyed communities, limited access to education for hundreds of thousands of young people, and plunged millions of people into despair.... Those who have managed to flee the violence to seek refuge, asylum and security in the United States are brutally pushed back and sent back to Cameroon. Protect those who have been...sent back to the same crisis, we pray.” Amen.*

*Writer: Amanda Craft-PCUSA & Assistant: Gavin Sylvia-CWS*



## Lighting the Candles: A Journey with Black Migrants

### Advent, Week 3: Seeking Light in Detention Centers

**Scripture:** “The Lord...has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners...For I the Lord love justice.” (Is. 61:1,8)

**Reflection:** The Scripture passages of this third Sunday of Advent are all about liberation, a better future, when the promise of God will be fulfilled. It is an invitation to look at a world where justice and compassion will prevail because the Lord is and loves justice. There is no other way to be in this world for us who claim to be the followers of that promise. As we light the third candle of our advent wreath this year, we are reminded as a nation of how little light with which we have surrounded ourselves. We think of migrants, especially Black migrants, to whom we did not offer liberation or healing. Rather, we have too often closed them in unjust detentions in conditions for which the prophet Isaiah or John the Baptist would forcefully rebuke us, and there is no end in sight. Lord, help us as a nation to heed your call to justice and to mercy.

**Question:** *How can we fulfill the promise of this season of light unless we release those unjustly detained?*

**Stories:** “Pastor Ben” recently shared his experiences as a panelist at an Interfaith Immigration Coalition forum called “From Africa to Deportation: Black Africans Confront the U.S. Asylum System.” After fleeing persecution in Nigeria and arriving in the United States, he was immediately taken into detention.

He continued, “I was told I would see the judge in two weeks,” but the time stretched to “five years and two months only because I asked for asylum at the airport,” Co-hosts at the forum, the Cameroon American Council and Immigration Justice Campaign, exposed how ICE’s technically termed ‘detention facilities’ are “really prisons” that “fuel the deportation machinery” and are typically located in rural areas without access to nearby immigration attorneys, translators, or interpreters.



*Mauritanian immigrant rights event with Bakary Tandia and Houleye Thiam before Covid-19, as printed on Oct. 26, 2020, by Ethnic Media’s Khalid Abdullah.*

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## Advent, Week 3: Seeking Light in Detention Centers

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While in detention, Pastor Ben spoke of how he “became a jailhouse lawyer, studied in the law library, learned Spanish and became familiar with other languages” to help inmates” find legal assistance. Detainees in U.S. centers hail from across Africa, including Guinea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, and more. Read [here](#) about how African asylum seekers encounter shameful treatment in U.S. detention centers, and how detention and unjust risks are also faced by [Mauritanians in Ohio](#), like Saidu Sow who lived in Cincinnati for decades, has a U.S. citizen daughter, and entered as a refugee.

### **Actions:**

- Take Action [here](#) to sign to demand accountability for the unwanted surgeries performed in, and to shut down, Irwin County Detention Center in Ocilla, GA. Read a [summary of abuses](#) and the 27 page [complaint](#) of abuses as submitted by Project South and others.
- Go [here](#) for ways your faith community can support efforts for justice for immigrants in detention at Irwin and Stewart centers in Georgia, and learn about El Refugio, the SGISN, and more! Tune in to join an online vigil about migration, including voices of some in detention, to be held Dec. 13 at 7 pm Eastern, led by the Episcopal Detention Ministry Network. Sign up at: [bit.ly/emmvigil](http://bit.ly/emmvigil). Join also in a National Week of Action [this week](#), with events ranging from holiday card making to virtual prayer vigils to in person actions - to highlight the families separated in this holiday season by detention.
- Follow [here](#) about new investigations into detention center abuses; particularly against Black immigrants, and call your Members of Congress at (202) 224-3121 to ask them to urge accountability for abuses.



Illustration: Dilek Baykara for The Intercept

### **Prayer:**

*Lord God, help us to remember those who tonight will go to sleep unfed and unwelcome, strangers in foreign lands, detained in unjust detention conditions, people who have fled for their lives and are far from their homes. We lift up to you those who are escaping persecution and conflict, having fled death, torture or ruthless exploitation.*

*So many carry wounds, mental and physical. So many have suffered greatly. Lord, give us more of your compassion for their plight, soften our hearts to their situation, and help us follow your lead in seeking justice and mercy on their behalf. We pray for an end to the wars, poverty and human rights abuses that drive desperate people to become refugees in the first place. We give thanks for people working in troubled countries and ask for more of your blessing so we can concretely consider how we will respond and are willing to risk in this Holy Season and the years ahead to bring liberty and healing to migrants currently detained. We pray in the name of the One born a refugee. Amen. (Adapted from “[Strangers in a Foreign Land](#),” by an Unknown Author)*

*Writer: Sister Maria Orlandini-Franciscan Action Network & Assistant: Viviana Westbrook-CLINIC*



## Lighting the Candles: A Journey with Black Migrants

### Advent, Week 4: Building Peace Amid Deportation Threats

**Scripture:** *“I will provide a place for my people Israel and plant them so they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did.”* 2 Samuel 7:10

**Reflection:** David’s descendants yearned for a safe home and God heard their cry. No one is ‘home’ when they are violently oppressed, terrorized or starving. On the contrary, home means safe and free; and every human being deserves to get home. In the U.S., many white people simply assume they will make it home at night. Citizens of color often run a gauntlet of racist interferences before they make it home. For most immigrants of color, making it home can be a soul crushing, desperate race. They face violent oppression and/or abject poverty in their birth country and they are pleading for us to let them finally be home and safe. Black immigrants did not, by accident of birth, inherit a safe home. So to make it home, immigrants of color need the followers of God to help them. Our directive from God is clear: oppose the wicked people who oppress our brothers and sisters of color and let them plant roots, let them make it home.

**Question:** *How will you share realities of unjust deportations with your friends and elected leaders, in order to help stop inhumane practices?*



**Story:** Ferd was a college student in Cameroon. Then he protested his government and its oppressive interference with the education system. He was arrested, jailed for a few days and released with a threat of violent repercussions if he continued his oppositional activity. Immediately upon release, he organized another protest. Consequently, he was arrested and forcibly dragged into a dark, bare building, far away from the city. Once there, the police savagely beat him. When

he was released, the police threatened to kill Ferd if he continued his quest for basic freedoms. At his asylum hearing, he said that he always returned to the protest scene because, he questioned, *“what else could I do?”* Oppression was not an

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## Advent, Week 4: Building Peace Amid Deportation Threats

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acceptable option. His last interaction with the police in his birth country included a violent physical and sexual assault. It ended with a threat to enact the same cruelty on his wife and children, and soon after, he left his country to protect them. Eventually, he was granted asylum in the U.S.

During COVID, deportations of black migrants have escalated. In October, 2020, [12 deportation flights](#) of Haitian immigrants left the USA. In addition, more than 50 Cameroonian and Congolese asylum seekers were deported back to a country exploding in violent conflict. Most of them live a grim story like Ferd's. Oppression most often awaits returnees.

### **Actions:**

- Read more [here](#) about alarming recent deportations of hundreds of Haitians and other Black immigrants in recent months, and read about [racial inequities](#) in border policies. Read also this [Amicus brief](#) filed by the Haitian Bridge Alliance in the case of *Al Otro Lado v. Chad Wolf*, to learn the background of disparate treatment of Haitian immigrants in U.S. history, and turnbacks of asylum seekers at the border under the Trump administration.
- Support organizations that provide legal services to families navigating the U.S.'s broken asylum system, and Black immigrant led organizations such as [Haitian Bridge Alliance](#), [Cameroon American Council](#), [UndocuBlack](#), [BAJI](#), & [ACT](#).
- Due to ongoing conflicts in Cameroon that threaten lives of migrants, consider signing [this letter](#) from CAC that demands Cameroon be granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS); meaning ICE could not deport Cameroonians.
- See the [Cameroon America Council's Toolkit](#) for other ways to stand in solidarity.



▲ About 25 Haitians who were deported from the United States arrive following a flight at Toussaint Louverture international airport in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in June. Photograph: Jean Marc Herve Abelard/EPA

### **Prayer:**

*God of Hope, You made David's household great among the nations and relieved them from further oppression. Jesus taught us that every single person is a member of God's household, deserving a dignified life, in a place of peace and freedom. We thank you for the gifts of peace, shelter and a political democracy. Give us the courage to contest tyranny and the generosity to provide a safe, welcoming home for all of our siblings in your blessed family. Give us courage to confront our racism and its impacts upon our immigration policies. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*Writer: Sister Mary Ellen Lacy-Daughters of Charity & Assistant: Gavin Sylvia-CWS*

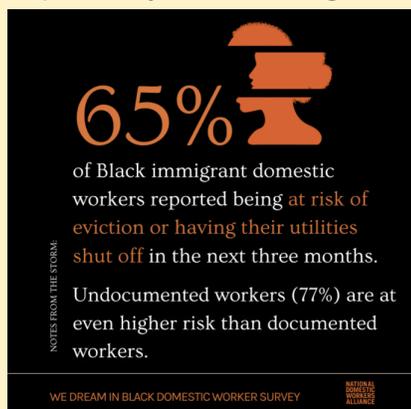


## Lighting the Candles: A Journey with Black Migrants

### Christmas: Celebrating Christ's Arrival & Hope During COVID

*“Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth...but the Lord will arise upon you, and God’s glory will be seen upon you.” Isaiah 60: 1-6*

**Reflection:** As we celebrate Christmas and near the end of the year, we come closer to a new administration – a new opportunity for us to come together and begin to acknowledge the privileges that some of us have, and the way those privileges impact others. This Christmas, may we remember another refugee whose family traveled to escape persecution and who was denied a place of refuge time and time again. May we not perpetuate those same behaviors. but hold out hope that God’s light will live in our hearts and allow us to see past our prejudices and hate. This year, COVID has wrought challenges we have never faced before; perpetuating issues that already existed, and making the already vulnerable even more vulnerable. Especially, Black migrants face systemic [racism, health disparities, and bias](#).



Not only are Black and Latin American migrants [more likely](#) to contract COVID, they are more likely to die from it. Black immigrants were [hit the hardest](#) with job loss and/or reduction in hours. The same issues that Black U.S. citizens face in this country of being racially profiled and disproportionately arrested and convicted happens to Black migrants. Black migrants are disproportionately represented in detention centers because of anti-Black and anti-immigrant sentiment.

These detention centers have wrought travesty on communities of color, leading to violence perpetrated against Black bodies. ICE has done all in its power to silence voices that have come forward through force and deportation. During this pandemic, we have seen how migrants in detention centers have suffered from outbreaks because of a lack of needed equipment and safety measures that are not provided.

Today, as we stand in what Pope Francis has referred to as “the globalization of indifference”, let us embrace the joy we feel, and be sure to let our voices guide our

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## Christmas: Celebrating Christ's Arrival & Hope During COVID

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brothers and sisters and lead by example to show we are not indifferent and demand a fair and just world for Black immigrant members. Let us be sure that we are giving them the opportunities to shine to their full potential.

**Question:** *How will you pay attention to the darkness of COVID's impacts upon detained migrants, and shine light upon how detention policies during COVID are further oppressing detainees?*

**Story:** Pauline Binam is a 30-year-old Cameroonian immigrant who has lived in the U.S. since she was 2 years old. Unfortunately, two charges from a shoplifting incident from when she was 17 years old resulted in her pleading guilty and paying a fine. She did not have an immigration attorney and so, was unaware of the consequences this would have. Because of this, ICE detained her and put her in the Irwin County Detention Center in Georgia for two years.

During her time there, Pauline had to see a doctor about irregular menstrual bleeding. She was told she would undergo a minor medical procedure, but instead the doctor removed one of her fallopian tubes without her consent. Pauline was informed that because of this procedure, she would have trouble conceiving if she wanted more children. Pauline has an asylum appeal pending. After the [whistleblower](#) complaint was published and her attorney identified her as a victim of nonconsensual gynecological procedure, ICE attempted to deport Pauline. Luckily, two Congressional representatives intervened and were able to get Pauline pulled off a plane at the last moment. Such incidents seem to occur frequently against Black migrants.

### **Actions:**

- [Demand](#) Congress include Black immigrants in the next COVID-19 stimulus bill.
- [Familiarize](#) yourself with President-Elect Biden's promises for the first 100 days which will include rescinding the travel and refugee bans, as well as accountability for ICE and CBP inhumane treatment.
- Follow Detention Watch and [join](#) in their efforts for Coronavirus Immigration Detention Release.

**Prayer:** *"When the song of the angels is stilled, When the star in the sky is gone, When the kings and princes are home, When the shepherds are back with their flock, The work of Christmas begins: To find the lost, To heal the broken, To feed the hungry, To release the prisoner, To rebuild the nations, To bring peace among people, To make music in the heart. "[When the Song of the Angels is Stilled](#)," by Howard Thurman.*

*Writer: Viviana Westbrook-CLINIC & Kaitlin Bell-CLINIC*





## Lighting the Candles: A Journey with Black Migrants

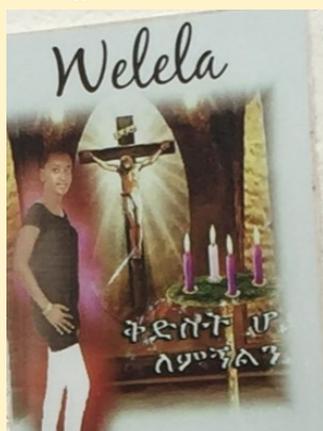
### Holy Family Feast: Linking with Global Journeys of Black Migrants

*“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place he was to receive as an inheritance; he went out not knowing where he was to go. . . . So it was that there came forth from one human . . . descendants as numerous as stars in the sky and as countless as the sands on the seashore.” Hebrews 11: 8, 12*

**Reflection:** While the Feast of the Holy Family honors the family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, one suggested scripture passage from Hebrews widens the concept of “family” to include the whole human family. Although Paul’s letter teaches that we look toward everlasting life in God as our true common home, it can remind us that families first seek a home on Earth. “Home” denotes a place of security, welcome and trust. The Holy Family fled the reach of murderous Herod and found welcome in Egypt. In this century, the largest migration in history finds millions of families on the move to escape violence, famine, climate crisis, or today’s oppressive “Herods.”

Thousands of migrants from Libya and other African nations have drowned in the Aegean Sea. Many Cameroonians and Congolese are turned back from the U.S. southern border. Haitian TPS recipients are deported in large numbers. Racism is on full display. May we be reminded that we are all strangers on Earth, called by our faith to embrace all migrants seeking a safe home, notably our Black sisters and brothers.

**Question:** *How aware am I of realities of Black migrants from Haiti, Cameroon, Congo and elsewhere, why they’ve fled, and what obstacles they’ve met?*



**Story:** On the island of Lampedusa, located on Italy’s southern Sicilian coast and very near to Africa, is a graveyard erected for the remembrances of migrants who have made extraordinary journeys there in hopes of protection on Italy’s shores. Indeed, the large number of migrants who have made it to Lampedusa—or lost their lives while en route there—have led it to be known as “the door of Europe.”

One such migrant was the 18 year old Eritrean named Welela who fled first to seek protection in Libya. There locked in a warehouse, she awaited again to embark for a next destination.

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## Holy Family Feast: Linking with Global Journeys of Black Migrants

*Continued*

Chosen weeks later by ones who come regularly to the warehouse to recruit new slaves, she was again placed on a ship bound for Lampedusa, given rice, and forced to cook for those on board. On that boat, the propane cooking stove erupted, burning 60% of her body. With open wounds, the salt from the water and gases from the fuel combined to eat her skin like painful acids... until she, with 20 others, died on board.

Upon arrival, the [Mediterranean Hope](#) project of the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy worked in partnership with a local lawyer to gather her story from other migrants and tediously locate her brother previously resettled in Sweden. Eventually, a prayer ceremony was held, a video recording was sent to her brother, and a gravesite was purchased for her in the local cemetery—where now her picture still gives testimony to her life and hopes.



*Image of a migrant ship off the shores of Lampedusa.*

Other migrants are remembered in the same cemetery, marked when their names are unknown by crosses made of wood from wrecked boats. Creative ministries to respond to Black African and Caribbean migrant needs are desperately needed and gratefully located all around the world—in places like [Morocco](#), in the Catholic Relief Service's Action for the Protection and Integration of Migrants in [West Africa](#) (APIMA), in ministries with Haitians in [Tijuana](#), and elsewhere.

### **Actions:**

- Contact your faith community to become familiar with their international migrant ministries, and learn how you can support Black migrant concerns globally. Seek to understand conditions that lead persons to need to flee and seek a new home.
- Help your faith community's global partners become aware of deportations happening by the U.S., and prepare to assist deportees being returned to their home countries such as the DRC, Cameroon, Haiti, Ethiopia, and elsewhere.
- Tell your legislators you support [these priorities and effort to create a White House Task Force on Black Immigrants](#), led by Black immigrant leaders.
- Urge the new Administration to issue executive orders to stop deportations of Black immigrants and keep its promise to admit 110,000 refugees in 2021.

### **Prayer:**

*Loving God, you who created all people in your image, uniting us a one human family, we pray for all Black migrants who have fled their homes seeking survival and safety. May they be welcomed as sisters and brothers in this country. May their courage and hardships be met not with silence, but with loving generosity and demands for justice. Amen.*

*Writer: Sister Marie Lucey-Franciscan Action Network &*

*Assistant: Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries*



## Lighting the Candles: A Journey with Black Migrants

### Epiphany: Shining a Path Towards a More Anti-Racist Future

**Scripture:** *Arise, shine; your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has dawned upon you. Though darkness covers the earth...on you the Lord will dawn, and over you God's glory will be seen.*" (Isaiah 60: 1-2)

**Reflection:** Epiphany celebrates the revelation to the whole world that the Christ, the word of God, light for the world, has been made flesh and dwells among us still. It is a light that no darkness can extinguish, not fear; not hatred; not even our original sin of racism. The feast of the Magi, the feast of the revelation of the light, reminds us of our call to be children of the light, to open our hearts to the love of God that is universal; to embrace the call to welcome God's children no matter their race, or creed or national origin. Christ's light shines in and through each and every one of us. As we celebrate this epiphany let us pray for the grace to banish the darkness of systemic racism and welcome into our hearts and our communities those too often denied a place at our table.

**Question:** *What will it take to for us to welcome the light of Christ and banish the darkness of systemic racism?*



**Story:** Mitsu, born and raised in Haiti, came to the U.S. on a student visa to attend college. During the course of her studies, Haiti was hit with a 7.0-magnitude earthquake, which devastated the country. The U.S. government designated Haiti for Temporary Protected Status (TPS), an authorized immigration status that allows individuals to remain lawfully in the U.S. until it is safe to return. Mitsu now works as a physician assistant, allowing her to help financially support her parents back in Haiti.

With the TPS designation for Haiti set to expire in January 2021 Mitsu's future is uncertain, Mitsu speaks to her parents frequently of conditions in Haiti and knows that, "Haiti is nowhere near in a condition to support its current residents let alone receive citizens currently living abroad." Mitsu hopes that Congress will take action and find a long-term solution for Haitian TPS recipients. "We have done everything the right way yet, still find ourselves entangled within the immigration debate." (Mitsu's story from: [Justice for Immigrants](#).)

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## Epiphany: Shining a Path Towards a More Anti-Racist Future

### Actions:

- Protect TPS recipients and DACA holders by [taking action here](#) to contact Congress.
- The House of Representatives has passed the Dream and Promise Act ([H.R. 6](#)), which would permanently protect TPS and Dream holders. It is time for the Senate to do the same. Ask your U.S. Senator to Support [S. 874](#), which, like the Dream Act and [H.R. 6](#), would provide critical permanent legal protection to DACA recipients, TPS recipients, and DED holders who are living in a state of uncertainty and fear.
- Share this statement from the Interfaith Immigration Coalition, [Black Immigrant Lives Matter](#), decrying the failure of our government to treat Black immigrants with dignity and respect and proclaiming, “Black Lives Matter.”

### Prayer:

*You are the God who bears the brunt of the question, “Why didn’t you stay where you belong?” You are the God who feels our embarrassment when we hear, “Keep your distance foreigner, you with your different-colored skin and your strange-sounding speech, with your culture, food, religion, and clothing that are inferior to my own.” You are the God who walks alongside us; works alongside us; struggles for justice alongside us as we make our way in a land where we are not always welcome. Loving God, grace us with understanding, with Epiphany. Help us to remember that your light shines in us all. Hear our prayers for racial justice and necessary immigration reform. Light our way as we walk the path toward your beloved community. Amen. (Adapted from a [prayer](#) by Jon Pedigo)*

*Writer: Sister Ann Scholz-Leadership Conference of Women’s Religious & Assistant: Madison Allman-CLINIC*



*Advent Resources by the Interfaith Immigration Coalition’s “Holy Days & Holidays” Team.*

*For more resources, go to: <https://bit.ly/IICReligiousResources>*

*For questions or comments, contact: [sstanley@dhm.disciples.org](mailto:sstanley@dhm.disciples.org) (Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Team Chair)*