

Moravian Church in America signs on to Church World Service defending refuge

The Provincial Elders' Conferences of the Moravian Church in America, Northern and Southern Provinces, have signed on to the [*Ash Wednesday Ecumenical Declaration: Defending Refuge*](#) from Church World Service (CWS). This declaration represents a commitment by religious leaders and organizations to stand against policies that endanger refugees and immigrants.

At a time when the United States faces defining choices about its treatment of the displaced and persecuted, this powerful declaration is a collective stand for justice. It calls on all people of faith to root their advocacy in scripture and directly challenges political leaders to remember that America's identity is inseparable from its immigrant history. The way the nation treats its most vulnerable will not only shape communities at home but will define the country's moral standing in the global arena.

In part, the Declaration says:

Together in faith and rooted in love, we resolve to continue in the centuries-old practice of Christian communities walking alongside refugees and immigrants in their pursuit of safety and dignity. We pledge to restore and promote hospitality and welcome to those seeking refuge—regardless of where they are from, how they pray or what language they speak.

Guided by our faith, we stand together against the sweeping measures that are devastating vulnerable families and jeopardizing their futures. These actions not only cause immediate harm but also threaten our country's long-term ability to welcome and support those in need. We grieve for the families who have been torn apart, had years-long reunification plans cancelled, been detained and deported, have been unjustly blocked from accessing asylum protections, and have been left without access to the basic assistance they need to thrive.

"After a thorough review of this *Ash Wednesday Ecumenical Declaration*, the Northern Province PEC was reminded that our own Chief Elder, Jesus Christ, began his human life as a refugee, fleeing for safety. Thus, and as stated in the Declaration, 'we recognize the face of Christ in each refugee and immigrant,'" said the Rev. David Bennett, president of the Northern Province PEC. "This declaration offers a solid Biblical mandate of compassion toward those who are vulnerable due to both the recent governmental action and inaction—uniting us ecumenically to "walk alongside" our refugee and immigrant siblings so that together a strong voice will be heard on behalf of those whose voice has been silenced in fear of being separated from both home and family."

"The PEC of the Southern Province took the opportunity to work cooperatively with our interprovincial partners (Northern Province PEC, Board of World Mission and Bishops of both

Provinces) to review the CWS statement,” said the Rev. Dr. Neil Routh, president of the Southern Province PEC. “Together we found alignment with our core values and beliefs. We hope it will serve as a response that helps members of the Moravian Church discern meaningful ways to respond in this moment with faith, love, and hope.”

[Church World Service](#) is a faith-based organization transforming communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement, and disaster. The Moravian Church in America is a Covenant Member of CWS and joins more than a dozen CWS Covenant members in signing the declaration, including our full communion partners the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the United Methodist Church.

Other organizations supporting this effort include individual faith leaders and congregations and organizations such as National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA; AME Zion Church; Catholic Legal Immigration Network; The Episcopal Church; Friends United Meeting; Latino Christian National Network; Mennonite Central Committee US; Sojourners; World Relief; and others.

This declaration calls for advocacy and action by committing ourselves to “protecting and renewing the tradition of welcoming all people—regardless of where they are from, how they pray or what language they speak. As we are reminded by Jesus in Matthew 25:35, ‘For I was a stranger and you welcomed me.’”

The complete *Ash Wednesday Ecumenical Declaration: Defending Refuge, along with advocacy and worship resources, can be found at the CWS landing page for the Declaration:* <https://cwsconnect.org/ecumenical-declaration/>

Provincial communications staff will be sharing information about our participation in this effort throughout our social media accounts this week. This text will also appear on Moravian.org beginning tomorrow.