



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

Greater Milwaukee Synod
East Central Synod of Wisconsin
La Crosse Area Synod
Northern Great Lakes Synod
Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin

Joint Statement on Immigration from ELCA Bishops in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan

But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

—Ephesians 4:15-16

Friends in Christ:

We, the six bishops who oversee the work of congregations in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, have come together to speak with one voice in this extraordinary time. With the words from Paul's letter to the Ephesians in mind, calling us to speak the truth in love and work together to build up the body in love, we are particularly concerned with recent actions by the president's administration in Washington regarding immigration and the suspension of the policy that previously restricted actions by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in "sensitive locations," including schools, hospitals, and houses of worship.

We reject the lies that these policy changes are based on: lies that seek to demonize all immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers as dangerous criminals who need to be removed from the country; and we call upon our elected leaders to base their policy decisions on the facts and on truth.

We reject the fear that these lies create, and we recognize that, while fear may be an effective organizing strategy in the short term, it is morally bankrupt and will lead to continued division and conflict; we call upon our elected leaders to find ways to work together to create an immigration system that builds people up and welcomes the contributions of those who seek to live here. Specifically, we call for the immediate restoration of the sensitive locations policy, allowing children and families the ability to engage in the basic functions of civic life.

We also reject the recent action that put an immediate end to all work related to refugee resettlement, recognizing that this action causes direct harm to countless families, many of whom are already living

and working in this country; and we call for the immediate restoration of funding for refugee resettlement.

Finally, we reject the notion that our nation is so divided that we will never be able to find common ground, and we call upon all our leaders, all those who work in the public and the private sector, all our congregations, pastors, deacons and leaders, to learn how to become effective allies for our immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking neighbors¹ so that we can live in a world that respects the human dignity of all and builds one another up in love.

In Christ,

Bishop Paul Erickson
Greater Milwaukee Synod

Bishop Martin Halom
Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

Bishop Anne Edison-Albright
East Central Synod of Wisconsin

Bishop Katherine Finegan
Northern Great Lakes Synod

Bishop Felix Malpica
La Crosse Area Synod

Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin

¹ For more information and resources, see <https://www.elca.org/our-work/publicly-engaged-church/ammparo>