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Faith Communities Across Traditions Tell the Trump Administration to Follow God's Directives to Welcome Immigrants

by [Bilal Askaryar](#) | Published [January 23, 2025](#)

Faith Leaders from the largest faith-based coalition focused on immigration respond to the litany of anti-immigrant Executive Orders

Washington, DC – The Interfaith Immigration Coalition, the largest faith-based coalition focused on immigration in the country, is outraged by the attack on immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees from the deluge of harmful Executive Orders released in the last two days by the Trump Administration, many of which are clearly unconstitutional. These include, but are not limited to, rescinding previous immigration enforcement guidelines and ending “sensitive locations” limits with the intent of mass deportations; ending asylum; suspending the refugee program indefinitely; sending military to the border and ending birthright citizenship.

As people of faith, we are committed to following our sacred texts and traditions that call on us to welcome immigrants and love our neighbors. Over the next four years, we will continue to follow a higher calling, and to ensure that we lift up a prophetic voice of hope and love in the midst of the rhetoric of fear and hate that has overtaken our politics.

Rev. Noel Andersen, National Field Director for Church World Service, added: “The next Trump administration has put together even more harsh and dehumanizing anti-immigrant policies than the last, much of which will not stand as constitutional. It is especially chilling to see a Department of Homeland Security spokesperson suggest immigration enforcement should have the right to apprehend people in houses of worship, disregarding our sacred calling to welcome and love our neighbors within our temples and churches. Additionally, the attempt to end refugee and asylum programs for those facing political persecution signifies the lack of democratic values many faith leaders fought for in our historic advocacy to pass the 1980 Refugee Act.”

Melissa Bowe, Co-Executive Director at Immigration Law & Justice Network, stated: “Trump’s Day One [Executive Orders & Emergency Declaration](#) double down on an alarming trend to vilify immigrants, create serious due process and constitutional infringements, and are in clear violation of human rights law. And it’s more than just breaking the law and our traditions of welcome

and refuge. These policies dehumanize people in such a way that desensitizes us to their pain, the brutality inflicted upon them, and the worthiness of their very lives. We know our communities are made stronger when all people can live with dignity, in safety, and have access to justice.”

Rev. Michael Neuroth, Director of the United Church of Christ Office of Public Policy and Advocacy stated: “We believe that all people, including immigrants, are made in the image of God. Yet the Trump administration’s actions fail to respect the God-given dignity of every person and our call to welcome the stranger. Faith communities will continue to look to our sacred texts and centuries of tradition to live out our faith by welcoming immigrants and protecting the most vulnerable among us.

Rev. Kendal L. McBroom, Director of Civil and Human Rights, said: “The current administration’s recent executive orders on immigration represent a stark departure from the United Methodist Church and America’s foundational values of inclusivity and compassion. By declaring a national emergency at the southern border, attempting to end birthright citizenship, and a host of other egregious policies, these actions not only undermine the rights of vulnerable populations but also strain diplomatic relations with neighboring countries. These measures, which frame immigrants as threats, fail to recognize the significant contributions that immigrants make to our society and economy. It is imperative that we oppose policies rooted in xenophobia and instead advocate for comprehensive immigration reform that upholds human dignity and reflects the true spirit of America.”

Kristyn Peck, CEO of Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSSNCA), stated: “The president’s executive orders go against our country’s core value of being a safe harbor for people who are forced to flee their homes and are seeking safety and freedom. In the past four years, LSSNCA and our community have welcomed more than 10,000 new neighbors and accompanied them in rebuilding their lives. They have helped [revitalize](#) and strengthen our communities. We urge elected officials to uphold our legacy of welcome and strengthen protections for forcibly displaced persons – not undermine the right to safety.”

Kelly Ryan, President, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)/USA, said: “The cornerstone of our beliefs and our work is that each person has inherent dignity, and we are called to uphold that dignity. Regardless of legal status, migrants deserve basic respect, not punitive laws and harsh treatment. JRS/USA offers and will continue to advocate for programs and services that enable those who seek safety to heal, learn, and determine their own futures. [As we have stated in the past](#), the U.S. must improve its asylum system and also can and must provide more lawful pathways for entry into the U.S. to meet both our country’s labor market needs and migrants’ need for dignified work.”

Pablo DeJesús, Executive Director of Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice, stated: “The crisis of conscience in the U.S. is official. A suspect ‘national emergency at our southern border’ has been declared among other dubious proclamations and sundry troubling statements of intent. We Unitarian Universalists disagree with the incoming administration’s approach to immigration. We name and center the threat to our faith, families, freedoms, and futures. We will not denigrate migrants, refugees, or asylees. We will not condone mass deportations. We will not ignore Dreamers and other DACA recipients. We reject the proposed constitutional rollbacks. We worry about the people at our borders and acknowledge their desire for peaceful due process and orderly administration in their communities. We see and name a systematic assault on international and human rights law in the administration’s proposed immigration policies. Instead, we should triple bottom line compassion, welcome, and dignity as the organizing principles for our U.S. immigration system. Instead, we celebrate the integral role immigrants play in our communities. Such is the meaningful, impactful work the creator calls the human heart and mind to do. Our fealty is to a vision for a just, compassionate, and sustainable world community where the spirit of love is extended to the stranger, as many of our faith traditions teach.”

Sister Marie Lucey, Associate Director of Franciscan Action Network (FAN), stated: “Franciscan Action Network will not watch passively as the newly-elected Administration crucifies sisters and brothers who are immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. We follow Jesus Christ who was crucified with nails as U.S. officials crucify many thousands of men, women, and children with cruel, inhumane, executive orders, many of which are illegal. We will work with faith partners and immigrant rights organizations to oppose draconian measures and will urge policies that respect and protect migrant sisters and brothers as our humanity and our faith compel us to do. We honor and thank immigrants who strengthen our communities and commit to do all we can to help them move from crucifixion to resurrection.”

Dylan Corbett, Executive Director of the Hope Border Institute, said: “Our churches and our borderlands are places of encounter with one another and with our God. Asylum and enforcement policies that do not respect the dignity of those on the move are an affront to our shared human dignity. Raids in our churches, schools and hospital are an attack on members of our community at pivotal moments in their life – dropping off and picking up children, seeking out healthcare and worshipping God. These are sad and troubling steps in the direction of indiscriminate deportations and expulsions. We call on all people of faith to stand for the freedom to praise our God without fear, whether in our temples or assisting the most vulnerable.”

Rabbi Jill Jacobs, CEO of T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights, said: "Trump's anti-immigrant actions on Inauguration Day are not surprising, but that doesn't mean that we are resigned. The Torah repeatedly commands us to 'welcome the *ger*,' translated as 'stranger' or 'immigrant,' emphasizing the importance of empathy and justice for those seeking refuge. American rabbis and cantors will remain in solidarity with immigrants, to demand policies that reflect the dignity and rights of all individuals."

Talya Steinberg, Associate Director of Government Relations and Advocacy at National Council of Jewish Women, said: "Our history and faith as a Jewish community compel us to welcome those fleeing persecution and violence or seeking a better life. Jewish tradition is clear: we have a sacred responsibility to welcome the stranger – a principle which appears no less than 36 times in the Torah. Guided by these enduring values, NCJW has and will continue to work to ensure that our communities welcome and support immigrants and refugees. Our leaders have a responsibility to protect and uplift the most vulnerable among us, not demonize entire communities of immigrants and stoke fear. No one should be afraid of facing immigration enforcement when participating in community life. No one seeking refuge or opportunity in our country should fear a locked door, separation from their family, detention, deportation, or increased criminalization."

Rev. Nathan Hosler, Director of the Office of Peacebuilding and Policy at the Church of the Brethren in Washington DC, stated: "As Brethren, we incessantly follow the teachings of Jesus and the New Testament, which send a clear message of welcome to those fleeing persecution and violence in their homelands. We look with deep dismay to an unprecedented wave of anti-immigrant policies like the executive actions signed by President Donald Trump that directly attack the fundamental rights of immigrants protected by our Constitution and international humanitarian law. However, we will not stop fighting back but stand in strong solidarity with our allies across all faith traditions that amplify our message of welcome. We oppose cuts to critical humanitarian assistance and immigrant protection programs as well as refugee resettlement. We oppose the brutal instrumentalization of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) that does not even spare houses of worship as sacred sanctuary spaces to arrest and detain individuals. We deeply oppose the militarization of our southern border that has produced too much suffering, trauma and death. We call out the dehumanization of our immigrant neighbors, friends and families. Whether they're vilified as criminals, animals or mentally ill – we will continue to uphold their dignity and fight for their rights with compassion and love. All immigrants and newcomers are beloved children of God!"

Fran Eskin-Royer, Executive Director of the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, said: "We already are seeing the tears and fears of immigrants and migrants just days into President Donald Trump's second term. These people are our brothers and sisters and never should be an after-thought. Rather, they – and we – must be central to the policies of our government. The executive orders and proclamations issued by President Trump regarding the border and immigrants are extremely tilted toward harsh outcomes over authentic security concerns. The National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd calls on the President and the new Congress to step back and search for a way to welcome those who want to build up the United States. We are a large country with much to give."

Anika Forrest, FCNL's Domestic Policy Legislative Director, said: "The immigration system desperately needs informed, modern solutions that establish safe, effective management of the border, sensible pathways, and prosperity. None of the recent executive actions, nor the promised future orders, ensure that security. They do promise chaos and pain. Establishing a better life should not rest on perceived deservedness. We all have value in the eyes of God. How we welcome our neighbors is proof of our national character."

Lamar Bailey, Director of Institute Justice Team Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Inc. stated: "The xenophobia and misleading claims undergirding these Executive Orders are so appalling that we cannot remain silent. Rather than constructive border measures and policy solutions that could improve our country's immigration system, these orders are cruel and dangerous, and merely serve to scapegoat immigrants and fan fear. Rather than "blaming the victims"—immigrants and refugees—our country's leaders should acknowledge responsibility for how U.S foreign policies have contributed to the spiraling poverty and violence from which people are fleeing for their lives. We call on the Administration, and all elected leaders, to reject these policies that tear families apart, traumatize children and disregard our country's obligations to respect human rights and protect vulnerable refugees. The whole world is watching and we should be ashamed to see the abandonment of U.S. leadership and commitment to humanitarian protection."

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition is made up of over 56 national, faith-based organizations brought together across many theological traditions with a common call to seek just policies that lift up the God-given dignity of every individual. In partnership, we work to protect the rights, dignity, and safety of all refugees and migrants. Follow us on Twitter [@interfaithimm](https://twitter.com/interfaithimm)

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