

## Immigration

### Ethical Reflection

- “The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Leviticus 19:33-34).
- Immigrants are strangers in a foreign land.
- As we seek to love our neighbor and welcome the stranger, we seek just and humane laws.

### Background

- Present laws contribute to uncontrolled, unlimited, and unscreened immigration, separate families for decades and make it nearly impossible to achieve legal status.
- The US has always been an immigrant nation. Our forefathers came for many reasons, some seeking asylum.
- Lack of immigration reform at the national level has led states to enact or propose their own immigration laws.
- A USA Today poll finds about 80% of Americans worry that undocumented immigrants are driving down wages and burdening schools, hospitals and other government services. Yet 77% are concerned that stricter immigration laws would mean undocumented immigrants and their families who have lived peacefully and productively in the country for years would be forced to leave (May 2010).

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### Present Situation

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, the Senate Democratic leadership presented a comprehensive immigration reform plan that builds on HR 4321. The Senate proposal includes:

- expansion of enforcement measures, including the biometric Social Security card and lacking restoration of due process.
- a path to citizenship for the eligible undocumented immigrants, immigrants with temporary protected status and certain others to be considered for the first step of a legalization program, an interim Lawful Prospective Immigrant status.
- reunite separated families
- create a new visa program for non-seasonal, non-high skilled workers
- extend additional protections for widows, orphans and other vulnerable populations
- address the subhuman conditions that many immigrants are forced to endure in detention facilities

### What Would Help

Enact and Implement Reform that:

- Upholds family unity
- Creates a process for undocumented immigrants to earn legal status and eventual citizenship
- Protect workers and provide efficient entry for new migrant workers.
- Facilitate immigrant integration
- Restore due process protections and reform detention policies
- Align enforcement of immigration laws with humanitarian values.

(5/2010)

### New York Member Denominations

American Baptist Churches, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (USA), Reformed Church in America, Religious Society of Friends, United Church of Christ, The United Methodist Church.

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