

Sanctuary Church Resolution
Eden United Church of Christ, Hayward, California
Recommended by
The Outreach & Cross-Cultural Learning Strategic Planning Team
& Church Council
Approved 6/6/2017

Summary

This resolution affirms the migration stories of Eden’s ancestors, congregants and community members, and affirms Eden’s ongoing commitment to learn from, travel with, and advocate for refugees and immigrants among us by declaring Eden United Church of Christ a “Sanctuary Church.”

Biblical, Theological, and Ethical Rationale

Eden United Church of Christ is a congregation grounded in an Abrahamic faith tradition whose ancestors were nomads and forced migrants and whose prophets implored the faithful to remember who we were—foreigners in foreign lands who were called to welcome strangers just as God had welcomed us (Lev. 19:33-34).

As Christians, we remember that for most of the Common Era Christians were marginalized members of their societies, and we strive to worship God and follow Christ’s example by feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming strangers, clothing the naked, healing the sick, visiting prisoners (Mt. 25:31-46), and loving our neighbors as ourselves (Mk. 12:31).

Eden Church initially aligned with the Congregational Churches who trace their ecclesiastical roots to the Pilgrims who sailed from England and Holland to North America in search of a better place to raise their children and a more prosperous way of life.

Eden later aligned with the United Church of Christ, a denomination that was founded through alliances among different ecclesiastical traditions, that has perpetually advocated for racial, social, and economic justice for all, and has repeatedly advocated for more hospitable, fair, and just treatment of immigrants.

Since Eden’s founding in 1865, its members have comprised immigrants and the progeny of immigrants—all who came to the United States and the Bay Area seeking life in all its abundance (Jn. 10:10).

On June 26, 2011, Eden members unanimously adopted the Compañeras/os Ministry Plan—a plan grounded in the congregation’s partnerships with first-generation Latina/o immigrants in the congregation and Eden Area. The initial goals of the plan were to reduce youth violence in Cherryland, improve our public schools, contribute to economic development in the Eden Area, advocate for immigration policy reform on the local, state and national levels, and create and implement cultural integration experiences in Cherryland. The plan has been continuously updated based on lessons learned as various strategies have been implemented and improved.

Text of the Motion

Eden United Church of Christ in Hayward, California declares itself a “Sanctuary Church,” hereby affirming the historic and ongoing immigrant rights work of our forebears and reaffirming our commitments to:

- 1) Listen to and learn from the migration stories of refugees and immigrants in our midst;
- 2) Learn more (and educate others) about the root causes of immigration;
- 3) Accompany migrants through the immigration and integration process in our communities;
- 4) Provide immigrants with humanitarian aid and referrals to social, legal and health services;
- 5) Advocate for more hospitable and nondiscriminatory immigration policies that promote due process, prevent mass deportations, and foster safer communities;
- 6) Develop partnerships with others who share these convictions and complement Eden’s strengths;
- 7) Announce this decision to the public (in English and Spanish) through Eden’s various communications channels.

Funding

Funding for the implementation of this resolution is budget neutral.

Implementation

Members, friends, and staff of Eden Church will implement the resolution with guidance from the Church Council and the Ministers.