

Church Policy and Positions on Immigration and Deportation

Preamble

This church is committed to upholding biblical principles of justice, mercy, and righteousness. While the church is not under the authority of the state, it recognizes the God-given role of governing authorities to maintain order and enforce just laws (*Romans 13:1-7*). Our policy reflects the tension between respecting the law and extending compassion to all people as image-bearers of God (*Genesis 1:27*).

Policy Overview

1. **Commitment to Biblical Principles:**
 - Uphold justice: Support the enforcement of laws that promote public safety and societal order, including punishing lawbreakers appropriately and proportionately.
 - Show mercy: Advocate for humane treatment of non-violent individuals affected by deportation, prioritizing dignity.
 - Promote righteousness: Encourage the government to create pathways for legal immigration, making it more lenient for those desiring to become citizens contributing to the nation.
 2. **Neutrality in Law Enforcement:**
 - The church will not actively inquire into individuals' immigration status.
 - The church will only cooperate with law enforcement (e.g., ICE) in cases where there is clear evidence of criminal activity or a threat to public safety.
 - The church reserves the right to provide sanctuary on a case-by-case basis, particularly for families or individuals facing prejudiced or inhumane treatment.
 3. **Practical Ministry:**
 - Offer spiritual and practical support to immigrants and their families, regardless of legal status, such as counseling and prayer support.
 - Partner with local and national organizations to provide assistance.
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Church Policy on Interaction with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

We recognize the complex and sensitive nature of immigration issues. While we affirm our commitment to cooperating with legal authorities, including ICE, we also prioritize the safety and well-being of our congregation and the uninterrupted conduct of our religious services. This

policy outlines our procedures for interacting with ICE agents should they be present on church property.

General Principles

- **Respect for Law Enforcement:** We acknowledge the role of law enforcement agencies in upholding the law.
- **Protection of Congregational Worship:** We are committed to ensuring that our religious services are not disrupted.
- **Due Process and Rights:** We respect the legal rights of all individuals, including the right to due process.
- **Pastoral Care:** We are committed to providing pastoral care and support to all members of our community, regardless of their immigration status.

Protocol for Interaction with ICE Agents

1. **Initial Contact:** If ICE agents arrive during a service or other church activity, our security team or designated staff members will approach them to ascertain the purpose of their presence.
2. **Verification of Credentials:** We will request to see official identification and any warrants or legal documentation authorizing their actions on church property. Document the names and badge numbers of all agents present.
3. **Communication and Negotiation:** Our designated representatives (pastors or designated staff) will communicate with the ICE agents, explaining our policy regarding the sanctity of religious services and requesting that they postpone any enforcement actions until the service or activity has concluded. We will offer a designated space for them to wait if they choose.
4. **Witnesses:** If ICE agents insist on immediate action, we will ensure that there are witnesses present during any interaction with church members. This could be a pastor, a staff member, or a designated member of the security team.
5. **Non-Interference:** We will not actively obstruct or interfere with lawful law enforcement activities. However, we will also not actively assist ICE in identifying or apprehending individuals without a valid warrant.
6. **Documentation:** We will meticulously document all interactions with ICE agents, including the date, time, location, names and badge numbers of agents, the purpose of their visit, and the details of the interaction.
7. **Post-Incident Review:** Following any interaction with ICE, our leadership team will review the incident and make any necessary adjustments to our policy and protocol.
8. **Legal Counsel:** In situations where there is uncertainty about legal obligations or potential violations of rights, we will consult with legal counsel.

Communication with Congregation

- This policy will be made available to all members of the congregation upon request.

Pastoral Support

- We will provide pastoral care and support to any member of our community who is affected by immigration enforcement actions.
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Theological Positions on Immigration and Government Authority

1. **The Church as Servant of Society:** The church seeks the justice, liberty, and flourishing of all people, particularly the righteous who are oppressed.
 2. **The Role of the State:** The state is permitted to maintain social order as long as it upholds justice for all, recognizing the power of sin in humanity.
 3. **The Church and the State:** The church is not subordinate to the state but remains benevolent toward it, advocating for righteousness. It supports law enforcement when it acts justly, and opposes it when it's overreaching.
 4. **Kingdom Representation:** The church represents the Kingdom of Heaven as much as possible, setting a prophetic ideal for the world.
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Conclusion

This policy seeks to balance the biblical mandate to uphold justice with the call to love and serve all people. By reflecting the values of God's Kingdom, the church acts as a moral compass for society, advocating for policies that honor God and promote the flourishing of individuals and communities.