Northern Illinois Conference
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Commission on Religion and Race

DIY Faithful Action: Loving Our Neighbor Community Engagement Checklist

Your church can express its solidarity with immigrants and advocate for their rights by holding a demonstration or other public witness. The Northern Illinois Conference's Commission on Religion and Race held a march on June 15 in Schaumburg to show its support and advocacy for immigrants. CCOR encourages churches to extend the witness by holding events in their communities.

Consider planning an event that works for their church while bearing witness to God's commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself" and acknowledging the humanity and dignity of our immigrant siblings.

Here are some steps to help you prepare for an action in your community.

Recruit a Planning Team

The team may consist of members from your church, nearby United Methodist churches or other houses of worship, and/or other community partners.

Decide what type of event your group should undertake. Possibilities:

- A prayer vigil (at church or elsewhere)
- Rally or march (at church or in the community)
- Know Your Rights training. Rev. Jeremiah Thompson (castiger1@gmail.com) can advise.
- Immigration 101 training. Lisa Rogers (jlrogers204@comcast.net) can advise.

Set a Date and Time

Suggestions:

- **June 15, 2026: to coincide with the NIC march in Schaumburg during the Annual Conference session.**
- **Sept. 13, 2026: NIC's Conference-Wide Faithful Action Day**
- June: National Immigrant Heritage Month
- June 20, 2026: International Refugee Day
- Any other time through Oct. 31, 2026

Register your church's participation here. This will provide the NIC with a list of participating churches and help us share our work.

Come back after your event and share your photos and reflections here. We will be working on a story to share the work of churches and communities.

Determine a Location

Possibilities:

- A rally or march could be held as a faithful witness in front of the church, especially if it is in a prominent location in the community, or elsewhere in the neighborhood.
- If other groups are participating, all might meet at the same prominent location.
- Plan a prayer time at the church at the time of the march so that those with mobility limitations and others may pray for those who are walking.
- If you plan to meet in a public place:
    - Check with local authorities and ask if a permit is required.
    - Alert law enforcement of your plans.
    - Publicize your event immediately.

Publicize the Event

- Add the event to your church's communication platforms and announcements.
- Send a press release (find a sample press release here) and send it to your local news outlets.
- Personally invite church members and others in the community to participate. Encourage church members to personally invite friends and others they know in the community. This is the most effective way to build participation.
- Ask the church's clergy to preach on prophetic witness about immigrants and how our Christian faith and Wesleyan social activism call us to engage, support, and witness.
- Use a pre-designed poster
- Create your own posters. Be sure to include who, what, where, when, and why

What To Wear

Decide on how you'd like people to dress. A couple of options:

- For events right after worship, wear "Sunday best"
- T-shirts with the church's information or promoting support for immigrants

Resources

- **Toolkit from General Board of Church and Society**
    - Creating Change Together: A Toolkit for Faithful Civic Engagement includes biblical and United Methodist grounding for civic engagement as well as strategies and tactics that you can do as an individual or group to pursue the common good.
- **Worship Elements**
    - Suggestions of Scriptures, Hymns and Prayers
    - A Sample Prayer Circle Structure for those unable to march.
- **Documents**
    - Faith and Facts Card: Immigration to the U.S.

- Faith and Facts Card: Immigration to the U.S. (en Español)
- Immigrant Welcoming Communities
- A Call to Action For Immigrants provides scriptural and Social Principle grounding for the work.

Helpful Articles and Videos

- *When Fear Knocks, the Church Shows Up: A Chicago Story* (13 minutes)
- "First Korean Church Hosts Prayer Vigil"
- *Faithful Resistance: A Public Witness for Immigrant Justice* (4 hours)
- The United Methodist Social Principles (¶ 163, Basic Rights and Freedoms [G]): "We affirm the dignity, worth, and rights of migrants, immigrants, and refugees, including displaced and stateless people. . . . We urge United Methodists to welcome migrants, refugees, and immigrants into their congregations and to commit themselves to providing concrete support, including help with navigating restrictive and often lengthy immigration policies, and assistance with securing food, housing, education, employment, and other kinds of support." (Read article)