

Minute Approved by the North Carolina Peace Resource Center
<https://ncpeaceresource.org/>

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"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

This poem by Emma Lazarus is graven on a tablet within the pedestal on which the Statue of Liberty stands. The words inscribed on the pedestal of this wonderful gift from France have welcomed immigrants to the United States for over 100 years. Currently, many individuals are making arguments that relate the problems of violence, drugs, and terrorism with illegal immigration in the United States. [Research](#) offers little evidence that immigration increases crime in the United States. If anything, there is some evidence that crime declines after immigrants arrive. These findings are supported by research from the [Public Policy Institute of California](#) on the composition of inmates in California prisons, which reveals that Mexican immigrants are dramatically underrepresented in the state prison system. The United States has welcomed almost [2 million refugees](#) since 1990, including hundreds of thousands from the Middle East. There have been dozens of terrorist attacks on American soil in that time, but none of them involved refugees.

As people of faith who believe that we are required to speak out for our suffering neighbors, we cannot remain silent in the face of mass deportations, family separations, mass incarceration in below standard facilities, and children living in inhumane conditions. We ask that we all examine our role in challenging the policies that have created these conditions. These queries are offered as a means for examining the legitimacy of these policies:

- Are we allowing fear to guide our responses to current events?
- Are we embodying the love of Christ in our reactions?
- How are our reactions evidence of our belief in a loving and merciful God?

"When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." **Leviticus 19:33-34**