

## RESOLUTION ON IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

### Resolution Background Information

Submitted by the Council of St. Anthony Park United Church of Christ, St. Paul

*Only the “Be It Resolved” statements were voted upon by the Annual Meeting.  
The Background and Whereas sections were neither voted upon nor approved.*

#### BACKGROUND

On December 12, 2006 agents of Homeland Security’s ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) entered the Swift meatpacking plant in Worthington, MN and arrested over 70 undocumented workers. The majority of these workers were immigrants from Mexico who had worked at Swift and were citizens of Worthington for some years. Under the ruse of prosecuting those few workers who had assumed the identify of U.S. citizens via Social Security numbers, many people of Hispanic heritage were arrested and detained regardless of their employment/citizenship status. The legality of these arrests and subsequent detention of these workers is not the basis for this resolution. Rather, it is in protest of the lack of foresight and preparation by the ICE regarding the welfare of the meatpacker’s children. Most children came home from school on December 12 to empty houses with no explanation provided by federal authorities as to the location of their parents. Community leaders and churches scrambled to find temporary homes for the children. A spokesman for the ICE states that it is their policy to not alert local authorities about proposed raids to prevent information reaching those to be arrested. Since local facilities were not available for so many prisoners, ICE sent dozens of the workers to detention centers in Georgia and other far away states. There was no information provided to family members regarding the whereabouts or status of the workers sent out of Minnesota.

WHEREAS there are sufficient Biblical references regarding God’s views on those who are not able to defend themselves (“The Lord enters into judgment with the elders and the princes of the people: it is you who have devoured the vineyard, the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people by grinding the face of the poor? says the Lord of Hosts.” Isaiah 3:14), and

WHEREAS there are over 12 million undocumented workers in the United States and it would be impossible for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to detain and deport even a fraction of the them, and that President Bush has proposed a “guest worker” program for people to be legally employed in the United States, and that labor shortages in the service, agricultural, construction, and food processing industries has drawn undocumented workers to seek jobs in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS it undermines the credibility of our country when we condemn other nations for human rights abuses while an agency of the Department of Homeland Security displays callous disregard for the welfare of children; and

WHEREAS children are especially vulnerable and deserve respect, compassion and appropriate care.

BE IT RESOLVED

1. That the 2007 Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ protests the manner in which Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) conducted the raid on December 12, 2006 in Worthington, specifically regarding the lack of established procedures to care for the children of the detained workers and the detention of the workers outside of Minnesota; and
2. That our local churches engage in educational efforts to become informed about immigration issues, including public policy, theological, and Biblical understandings; and,
3. That our local churches, particularly those in communities with large immigrant populations, be especially mindful of ways to minister to these new neighbors, including responding to ICE actions with emergency family and childcare support; and,
4. That Conference Minister Karen Smith Sellers contact the Secretary of Homeland Security and Commissioner of Immigration and Customs Enforcement asking them to change policies so that children whose parents and caregivers are subjects of ICE actions are cared for in safe and appropriate ways; and,
5. That Karen Smith Sellers contact Minnesota's U.S. Senators and Representatives, urging them to support immigration reform in the form of legislation that would enable people from other countries to be legally employed in the United States.