

MN Conference Annual Report 2022 Immigration Team

During this past year COVID still made it too challenging for members of the Conference Immigration Team to meet in person with congregations interested in exploring ways to begin or expand their work with immigrants. We did have some opportunities to confer with churches through zoom meetings. Team members also were active in their areas with various immigration justice work.

From Rev. Charlotte Frantz in the Duluth area:

In this past year, Peace United Church of Christ in Duluth supported the work of a Sponsor Circle that is resettling four women from Afghanistan. The Circle, all members of Peace, made arranged housing for the women and continues to accompany them as they apply for various benefits; begin employment; and explore education and career options. In doing so, the Circle has strengthened ties between Peace and other communities of faith in Duluth, including the Benedictine sisters and the local mosque. Circle members have come to appreciate how much cultural education is required for successful resettlement. At the same time, several members of the congregation have continued their involvement with the Interfaith Committee for Migrant Justice. This interfaith group focuses on supporting asylum seekers and is becoming more organized in the effort to find sponsors and hosts. Rev. Charlotte Frantz, a member of the Conference Immigration Team, has been involved with both the Circle and ICMJ and serves as a liaison between the Conference Team and activities at Peace. Peace's work began with becoming a sanctuary church and then an immigrant welcoming congregation. Few knew that the next steps would be resettlement and accompaniment!

From Diane Haines, Mayflower UCC in Minneapolis:

The Mayflower Immigration Team (MIT) continues to work with the Advocates for Human Rights in Accompanying asylum seekers. We temporarily housed in a local hotel 6 immigrants who were released from detention. One of whom the team continues to accompany as he seeks asylum status. The team continues to be an active part of the South Minneapolis Immigrant Justice coalition which includes congregations from many faith communities. The team is also accompanying a local Afghan woman who is working to bring the rest of her family to Minnesota.

Rev Mann formerly of First Congregational of Mankato last year worked within the Mankato community to bring together different faith communities to address racial justice issues. She developed a strong relationship with the ACLU in Mankato and helped to see a chapter of the NAACP.

The Conference team has been supportive of the amazing work that the SARI (Sanctuary and Resistance to Injustice) team out of Union in Elk River has done to raise awareness in their area and beyond the untenable conditions at the Sherburne County Jail that immigrants have experienced. Their work includes confronting the area county commissioners with these concerns and their request that the commissioners vote to not renew the ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) contract in 2023. Consider supporting their work. This work is part of the response to the Conference resolution in 2019 to support efforts to Make Minnesota a Sanctuary State. Thanks to the many congregations that have been a part of this endeavor. Attend the annual meeting workshop and learn more about this.

The Conference team cheers on the work of supporting immigrants that is being done in many other areas of the state: Northfield, Moorhead, Alexandria, Minneapolis. We would love to hear about the

work that other conference congregations are doing. If your congregation is interested in getting support from the Conference team in beginning this work, please contact us.

Diane Haines, chair of the MN Conference Immigration Team