

Sanctuary Region Resolution – American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago

May 3, 2025

We, the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago (ABCMC), oppose the recent moves by the Trump administration to strip immigrants here legally of their temporary protected status and revoke the “sensitive locations” protections for churches. The present administration’s efforts to demonize immigrant communities, as well as the president’s stated plans to deport countless undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers, have pushed us to speak out on this issue. This is both a local and national issue, as can be seen from the President’s targeting of Chicago and Congress’ summoning of Mayor Brandon Johnson to answer questions about the city’s sanctuary status. Called by Jesus Christ to welcome the stranger, we denounce the cruelty of this administration’s approach to immigration.

As such, ABCMC hereby declares itself to be a sanctuary region of the American Baptist Churches USA. In its simplest terms, becoming a sanctuary region means that ABCMC is publicly declaring that walking alongside immigrants and refugees is a matter of faith. Indeed, many of those in our congregations are immigrants, and some lack legal status. Being a sanctuary region means that we stand in solidarity with our siblings in Christ within the ABCMC and those who are bearing the brunt of this administration’s cruelty outside of it.

Importantly, being a sanctuary region does not call for any person or congregation to engage in any particular action. Being a sanctuary region will look different in different contexts. It may mean providing space for people to live; providing financial and legal support to those who are working through the immigration system; or supporting other congregations and service providers. We cannot mandate or direct our congregations and ministries to respond in specific ways. Each must work out what this means for them in their context.

Sanctuary for a congregation may mean hosting English as a second Language (ESL) classes; marching as people of faith against the detention of children and families; providing housing for a community member facing deportation; or, in some of our congregations, having thoughtful conversations about what our faith says about immigration. All of these are a step closer to sanctuary in our faith communities and sanctuary in our world.

Being a sanctuary region is about loving our neighbors. We commit to continuing in prayer and solidarity with all those affected by the present administration’s shifts in policy, rhetoric, and enforcement.