



Dear Missouri Clergy and Lay Leaders,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I write to you with a heavy heart and deep concern in light of troubling news unfolding in our nation, especially in recent days in Minneapolis. Reports of aggressive immigration enforcement, families being separated and communities living in fear have shaken many of us.

These are not abstract policy debates. These are human lives. These are families. These are children. These are our neighbors.

Many of us, including the Church, have tried to keep our heads down and hope things would somehow get better. The problems feel enormous. And many pastors and congregations feel real pressure to stay “safe,” to avoid controversy, and simply to keep the doors open in a fragile season. I understand that. At the same time, we must name something harder: fear is doing its work. Voices are being suppressed. Communities are being intimidated. When fear sets the terms, silence can start to feel faithful. It is not.

We must not let fear win.

Our Social Principles remind us that every person is created in the image of God and endowed with sacred worth. They call us to defend human rights, to resist unjust systems, to protect the vulnerable, and to insist on dignity, due process and humane treatment for all.

Immigration policy is complex. Laws and borders matter. But Christian discipleship insists that how laws are enforced, who bears the cost and how the vulnerable are treated are not just political questions. They are moral ones.

The Church has long taught that human dignity is not granted by governments. It is given by God. Jesus tells us that whatever we do to the least of these, we do to him. Again and again, Scripture reveals that God's heart is found among those pushed to the margins. The Church must stand with immigrants, refugees and all who seek safety, dignity and due process.

Therefore, I am calling on the Missouri Conference to renewed faithfulness and courageous witness. I invite every pastor and congregation to:

- Pray intentionally and publicly for immigrants, refugees and all families living in fear.
- Preach and teach from Scripture and our Wesleyan tradition about God's concern for the stranger, the displaced and the oppressed.
- Study our [United Methodist Social Principles](#) and use them as a guide for faithful moral discernment.
- Support trusted ministries and community organizations that provide humanitarian aid, pastoral care, legal assistance and accompaniment to vulnerable immigrants.
- Build relationships with immigrant and refugee communities in your area, not as projects, but as neighbors.
- Speak respectfully but clearly to public officials and advocate for policies that uphold human dignity, protect families and honor due process.

The Missouri Annual Conference exists to equip pastors and lay leaders to love boldly, serve joyfully and lead courageously. This is one of those moments when that calling must move from words to witness.

We do not do this because it is easy. We do it because it is faithful. We do not do this because it will make everyone comfortable. We do it because the gospel rarely does.

And we do not do this alone. We do it trusting that the Holy Spirit is still at work, calling the Church to courage, compassion and costly love.

May God give us the courage to be the Church in this hour.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RF' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

Bishop Robert Farr
Missouri Conference of The United Methodist Church