

Madison Christian Community

Advent Lutheran Church

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An Ecumenical Partnership

Community of Hope, UCC

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I'm Nick Utphall, pastor of Advent Lutheran of Madison Christian Community.

Along with my welcoming you here on behalf of my congregation and my colleague Sonja Ingebritsen and Community of Hope UCC, I'm eager to share that this congregation proclaims welcome.

We strive to be welcoming people, because that is who we believe and understand God to be:
a God of unconditional love and abundant welcome.

That welcome from this place has especially extended to those who have been made in other ways to feel out of place, oppressed or antagonized, unwelcome.

Such animosity should have no place in our community, in our culture, in this society, much less in a nation that often tries to label itself as "Christian."

From the perspective of our God, all of us are declared to be family, as equal, and are beloved.

From the perspective of Jesus, we are to be neighbors to anyone in times of need.

And yet that is not what our government or the domineering voice of our culture has been proclaiming. Instead they have said that some are not welcome, that some are to be categorized as worse, that some families don't matter, and that some don't even deserve the guaranteed protections of due process in a fair system.

Because our congregation has heard that those fears have become so threatening to the immigrant and refugee population, and because our faith is founded on the assurance of God's repeated encouragement with the words "do not be afraid," the Madison Christian Community proclaims "¡Santuario para inmigrantes y refugiados!" and has joined the Dane Sanctuary Coalition and over 1000 congregations nationally as one of the local congregations so far to agree to serve as sanctuary congregations and host sites for those who are valued and valuable members of our society, who are not only beloved in their own family but are beloved amid God's human family.

In this congregation, we are being prepared for the possible instance of welcoming an individual who is facing deportation that would damage their life, fracture their family, and rupture the good of our community, as part of giving that person a publicly visible place to dwell while waiting for a lawful hearing, and to exhibit to our society how we can and should do better in welcome and caring for each other.

This is what we understand to be the request from our local neighbors and our calling as Christians in God's world.

Estamos unidos. We stand together. Thank you, and you're welcome.

**Purpose Statement: The purpose of the Madison Christian Community is to
Live faithfully and lovingly with God, neighbors and creation.**

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