

## General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

**Resolution No.:** 2024-D026  
**Title:** Enable Episcopal Migration Ministries to More Fully Live Out its Mission  
**Proposer:** Day-Strehlow, Ms. Janet  
**Topic:** Immigration

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### **Directly Related:** (Attached)

2022-A022 Commend and Endorse the Work of Episcopal Migration Ministries  
2018-C009 Urge Church to Become a Sanctuary in Support of Immigrants  
2015-D057 Recommit to Giving Sanctuary to Immigrants  
2000-A053 Adopt Migration Ministries Mission Statement  
1997-A129 Charge Dioceses and Provinces with Ministry to Migrant Farm Workers

**Indirectly Related:** (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

None

*In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2022, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#).*

# D026 - Enable Episcopal Migration Ministries to More Fully Live Out its Mission

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**Final Status:** Not Yet Finalized

**Proposed by:** Day-Strehlow, Ms. Janet

**Endorsed by:** Wiley, Mr. James, Cole, The Rev. Deacon Richard, Baer, The Ven. Dr. Walter, Silva-Strommer, Ms. Susie, Powell, The Rev. RJ

**Supported by:** Rio Grande Borderland Ministries and parish partners, Episcopal Diocese of San Diego Migration Ministry

**Has Budget Implications:** Yes

**Cost:** \$200,000.00

**Amends C&C or Rules of Order:** No

**Requests New Interim Body:** No

**Changes Mandate Of Existing Ib:** Yes

**Directs Dfms Staff:** No

**Directs Dioceses:** No

**Directs Executive Council:** No

**HiA:** No House Assigned

**Legislative Committee Currently Assigned:** No Committee Assigned

**Completion Status:** Incomplete

**Latest House Action:** N/A

**Supporting Documents:** Yes

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## Resolution Text

*Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring,

*Resolved*, That the 81st General Convention reaffirm the following mission statement of Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) as adopted by General Convention in 2000: “The Episcopal Church in Service to Refugees and Immigrants”; and be it further

*Resolved*, That this General Convention affirm that The Episcopal Church seeks to serve immigrants regardless of their immigration status or geographical location, within the limits of its ability; and be it further

*Resolved*, That this General Convention acknowledge that due to restrictions attached to U.S. federal government funding, the vast majority of EMM’s current annual budget must be dedicated to people in the U.S. who have “refugee” and certain other narrowly defined immigration statuses, thereby excluding services for the vast majority of immigrants

including but not limited to asylum seekers, undocumented immigrants, and immigrants who are located outside of the United States; and be it further

*Resolved*, That this General convention affirm that Episcopal Migration Ministries must continue to pursue its mission regardless of the availability of funding from the U.S. federal government; and be it further

*Resolved*, That this General Convention assert that Episcopal Migration Ministries should be empowered to take additional steps (for example hiring additional staff, providing training to partners and volunteers, providing resources to people in need, building the capacity of congregations, etc.) in order to aid categories of immigrants other than those who may be served with funding from the U.S. federal government; and be it further

*Resolved*, That General Convention request a budget allocation of \$200,000.00 for the implementation of this resolution.

## Explanation

- **General Convention resolved in 2000 (2000-A053) to adopt the following mission statement for Episcopal Migration Ministries: “The Episcopal Church in Service to Refugees and Immigrants.”**

**The Episcopal Church has repeatedly affirmed its call to aid migrants, regardless of their formal legal status**, for example by recommending that Episcopal Church “institutions and congregations become places of welcome, refuge, healing, and other forms of material and pastoral support for those targeted for deportation due to immigration status...”

- (2018-C009). This resolution and others have provided sound theological grounding for aid to immigrants.
- **Increasing numbers of people around the world live as “forced migrants” or “forcibly displaced persons”** (see final bullet point below for a glossary of immigration terms): at the end of 2022 108.4 million people had been compelled to flee from their home countries or regions as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing the public order, compared with 89.3 million at the end of 2021.
- **Forced migrants seeking safety in the United States are overwhelmingly people of color.** In federal year 2022 (the most recent year for which data are available) approximately 54% of refugees admitted to the U.S. were from Africa, 37% were from Asia, 10% were from Latin American or the Caribbean, and 9% were from Europe or Central Asia. In that same year the countries of origin of people granted asylum were from the following countries, in rank order: P.R. China, Venezuela, El Salvador, Guatemala, India, Honduras, Afghanistan, Turkey, Russia, and Mexico, with a remaining 39.5% from countries not listed. In 2021, Undocumented immigrants were most likely to be from Mexico and Central America (66%), Asia (11%), South America (9%), Europe/Canada/Oceania (7%), the Caribbean (4%), and Africa (3%).
- **“As climate change makes some parts of the earth uninhabitable, a climate migration crisis looms that international law is not prepared to address.”**

Climate change fuels forced migration in many ways: For example, by increasing the likelihood and frequency of natural disasters, increasing extreme poverty and conflict over dwindling resources, and exacerbating social tensions that can lead to scapegoating and warfare.

- **EMM obtains the vast majority of its annual budget from the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement, which require that funds be used exclusively to benefit individuals within the United States who have formal “refugee” status or other narrowly defined legal status.**
- **EMM is barred from using the abovementioned funds to work with the great majority of forcibly displaced persons within the United States**, including but not limited to undocumented immigrants (over 11 million), asylum seekers (approximately 240,000 applicants per year), and millions worldwide whose migration is made necessary by climate change.
- **Depending upon the outcome of the next U.S. presidential election, the American refugee resettlement program may be drastically reduced or even dismantled**, judging from lessons learned between 2017 and 2021: “The Trump administration didn’t just try to throw a wrench in the gears... It actually tried to disassemble the entire resettlement infrastructure.” By following through on such a strategy, the U.S. federal government would not only cause untold human suffering, but it would also leave EMM with a small proportion of its current annual budget. Additional resources are needed to guard against this possibility and meaningfully continue the work of EMM. The wording of this resolution would allow for funds dedicated by General Convention to be used to aid refugees, if such funds were to become unavailable through the federal government.
- **In 2022, General Convention resolved (2022-D045) that EMM should direct specific attention towards LGBTQ+ people who were compelled to flee their homelands.** A far higher number of them in the United States have asylum seeker status (approximately 30,000 annually) than refugee status (approximately 1,000 annually). Funds dedicated through this resolution could be used to continue and expand this ministry: For example, by providing training to partner and affiliate agencies on how they can be more fully welcoming of LGBTQ+ forced migrants, and by helping partnering congregations to develop direct-service programs for LGBTQ+ asylum seekers.
- **EMM is also barred from using funds from the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement to work with forced migrants outside of the U.S.**, including in regions such as Europe where Episcopal Church congregations seek to aid migrants.
- **Other Episcopal Church-related institutions that are working to support forced migrants who are outside of the United States** (for example Episcopal Relief and Development, an organization that is independent of The Episcopal Church) **could benefit from the partnership and expertise of Episcopal Migration Ministries** (a ministry of The Episcopal Church). For example, Episcopal congregations in Europe could be trained and mentored to use the [Neighbor-to-Neighbor program](#) which helps congregations to provide high-quality service programs to asylum seekers.
- **EMM currently attempts to aid immigrants other than those who are covered by funding from the U.S. Department of State and Office of Refugee Resettlement through volunteer efforts, with minimal time dedicated by existing staff.** This is the case, for example, for the [Asylum and Detention Ministry Network](#) (name to be changed at this General Convention), the [Neighbor-to-](#)

[Neighbor](#) program, and the [Rainbow Initiative](#), all of which require additional focus for planning, coordination, training, and follow-up functions in order to make the best use of EMM's international and growing cadre of volunteers.

- **Brief glossary of immigration terminology used in this document:** Legal terminology related to migration is complex and differs by country. These definitions are especially relevant to the United States and to the current proposed resolution. A “forced migrant” or “forcibly displaced person” is someone who has been compelled to flee from their home country or region as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing the public order. Refugees have been recognized by the U.S. government as needing protection and then resettled in the U.S. by EMM and 9 other designated agencies and their affiliates. Asylum seekers have entered the U.S. and then petitioned for permission to stay permanently. Asylees have been granted that permission. Undocumented or unauthorized immigrants are at risk of being expelled from the U.S.
- **Immigration status has wide-ranging implications for the lives of immigrants including:** employment authorization; pathway to legal permanent residency and citizenship; eligibility for Medicaid, SNAP (Food stamps), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); Eligibility for initial refugee program (Reception & Placement) - housing support, case management, basic needs, referrals, employment assistance; eligibility for additional refugee programs funded by the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), including employment services, intensive medical & mental health case management; eligibility to apply for family reunification.

Note: this resolution and/or its explanation contains external references, such as URLs of websites, that may not be in the required languages of General Convention. Because of copyright restrictions, the General Convention cannot provide translations. However, your web browser may be able to provide a machine translation into another language. If you need assistance with this, please contact [gc.support@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:gc.support@episcopalchurch.org).



**Resolution Number:** 2022-A022  
**Title:** Commend and Endorse the Work of Episcopal Migration Ministries  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 80th General Convention commend the work and mission of Episcopal Migration Ministries, specifically its faithful ministry of welcome and love to more than 100,000 refugees through its 40 year-old Resettlement Program and its 80 year-old Church Engagement Program; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the General Convention reaffirm that The Gospel of Jesus Christ calls us to welcome the stranger and respect the dignity of every human being and that those fleeing persecution have a particular claim on our attention and concern as they seek a life of dignity and peace in the face of oppression; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the General Convention endorse the continued ministry of Episcopal Migration Ministries in responding to the needs of refugees, even as the number allowed to enter the United States has been greatly reduced in recent years, and working with the Church through the Church Engagement Program to minister to asylum seekers, those in detention, and all migrants.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), p. 439.



**Resolution Number:** 2018-C009  
**Title:** Urge Church to Become a Sanctuary in Support of Immigrants  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, in obedience to the many biblical injunctions imploring us not to wrong or oppress the alien in our midst and Jesus' own mandate to extend care for the stranger, and in accordance with our Baptismal Covenant, reaffirms resolution 2015-D057 supporting the New Sanctuary Movement; and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church urge its members, as people of faith and people of conscience, pledge to challenge and question any unjust immigration law, policy, or practice that is inconsistent with our biblical mandate to "not wrong or oppress a resident alien" (Exodus 22:21); and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church recommend that its institutions and congregations become places of welcome, refuge, healing, and other forms of material and pastoral support for those targeted for deportation due to immigration status or some perceived status of difference, and that we work alongside our friends, families, and neighbors to ensure the dignity and human rights of all people; and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church encourage its members to connect with local and national sanctuary communities and institutions, faith-based coalitions, and immigrant rights groups and coalitions, and engage in educating, organizing, advocacy, and direct action, and other methods as deemed appropriate in each context, to ensure the safety, security, and due process for immigrants, with a focus on keeping families together of the undocumented community, and to assist in equipping congregations, clergy and lay leaders to engage in such work, appropriate to local contexts, capacity, and discernment; and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church affirm our church's support for U.S. executive policies that deemphasize immigrant enforcement action against those who have not committed felony crimes, and reaffirm our church's support for congressional action for comprehensive and just reform of the broken U.S. immigration system as called for in General Convention resolution 2009-B006: "to allow undocumented immigrants who have established roots in the United States and are often parents and spouses of U.S. Citizens to have a pathway to legalization and to full social and economic integration in to the United States."*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), p. 612.



**Resolution Number:** 2015-D057  
**Title:** Recommit to Giving Sanctuary to Immigrants  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

***Resolved, That the 78th General Convention recommit to the spirit of the New Sanctuary Movement by supporting congregations so they can assist immigrant individuals, unaccompanied minors, families, and communities by being centers of information, services and accompaniment, and by supporting families facing separation in the absence of comprehensive, humane immigration reform.***

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), p. 407.





**Resolution Number:** 2000-A053  
**Title:** Adopt Migration Ministries Mission Statement  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 73rd General Convention of the Episcopal Church adopt the statement "The Episcopal Church in Service to Refugees and Immigrants" as the mission statement of the Episcopal Church on behalf of refugees and immigrants.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Denver, 2000* (New York: General Convention, 2001), p. 538.



**Resolution Number:** 1997-A129

**Title:** Charge Dioceses and Provinces with Ministry to Migrant Farm Workers

**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred

**Final Text:**

***Resolved, That the 72nd General Convention charge the Dioceses and Provinces of the Church with greater responsibility for sustaining and developing ministries of advocacy and outreach among migrant and seasonal farm workers, especially in the areas of health, education, family integrity, economic justice, the fight against "scapegoating," and religious community building.***

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, 1997* (New York: General Convention, 1998), p. 63.