**Concern for Migrant Minors separated from Family**

Submitted by Rev. Linda Theophilus, Emmanuel -Eastmont

Whereas,  God’s concern for the  “orphan, the widow and the stranger” and the instruction to welcome them as one of your own is repeated often in the Old Testament ( e.g. Leviticus 19: 33-34, Psalm 146, Jeremiah 7: 5-7 )

Whereas, Jesus taught us to welcome the stranger (Matthew 25: 31-46 )

Whereas, the commandment “do not kill” includes not causing emotional harm ( Matthew 5: 21-22)

Whereas the United States government has begun the practice of separating children from parents when the parents and children come to our borders for international protection and this separation causes toxic stress for parents and children and life long trauma for children

Whereas this practice is morally and emotionally harmful to  Border Patrol agents, Immigration and Customs Enforcement personal and all government employees  who are required to enforce the forced removal of children from parents, siblings and other family

Therefore, be it resolved...

That the SWPA Synod express gratitude to Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, the ELCA AMMPARO strategy and ELCA-Advocacy for their care, expertise and advocacy for migrant minors and their parents and

that the synod in assembly remind congregational leaders to make use of their expertise in congregational education and service and

That we affirm the public voice of presiding bishop Elizabeth Eaton and the ecumenical partners and interfaith leaders concerning the well being of migrant minors and migrant families and furthermore

That the congregations of the SWPA Synod express our care for migrant minors, their parents and those required to separate children from parents by our prayer, advocacy and action including appealing to our federal senators and representatives concerning our injustice separating children from parents while asylum and other immigration proceedings are underway.

**ELCA presiding bishop, faith leaders issue statement on family separation**

CHICAGO (June 7, 2018) –

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), has convened ELCA ecumenical and inter-religious partners in a statement addressing concerns over a recent U.S. government policy calling for more stringent enforcement of federal immigration laws. The policy will most likely result in an increase in family separations.

 The letter follows:

*Recently, the Administration announced that it will begin separating families and criminally prosecuting all people who enter the U.S. without previous authorization. As religious leaders representing diverse faith perspectives, united in our concern for the wellbeing of vulnerable migrants who cross our borders fleeing from danger and threats to their lives, we are deeply disappointed and pained to hear this news.*

*We affirm the family as a foundational societal structure to support human community and understand the household as an estate blessed by God. The security of the family provides critical mental, physical and emotional support to the development and wellbeing of children. Our congregations and agencies serve many migrant families that have recently arrived in the United States. Leaving their communities is often the only option they have to provide safety for their children and protect them from harm. Tearing children away from parents who have made a dangerous journey to provide a safe and sufficient life for them is unnecessarily cruel and detrimental to the well-being of parents and children.*

This letter was signed by Bishop Eaton and 20 national faith leaders.