



SoCal Presbyterian Immigrant Accompaniment Ministry

ACCOMPANIMENT UPDATE

MAY 4, 2020

Dear friends,

I hope this finds you all safe and well, and for the strange and challenging moment we are living in, I invite you to read this prayer adapted from Nadia Bolz-Weber's Prayers for Sunday, April 26th, 2020:

Holy God hear my intercessions,

For those who are giving birth alone; for those who are grieving without their people; for the beleaguered parents who ran out of creative ideas two weeks ago; for those who don't know where this week's grocery money will come from; for everyone who has watched the date of their wedding, or their graduation, or their birthday, or their dissertation defense, or their long hoped for vacation, or their family reunion, or the "non-essential" medical procedure they hoped would change their life, come and go; for the exhausted and the despairing, I ask that your comfort, your presence, and your peace be felt. And if that's not possible, could you just nudge the right person to reach out and call them? Just that Lord. Just that?

Holy God hear my praise,

For the animals who get to have their people home all day; for a slow enough life that allows for baking and a garden and the use of cloth napkins; for the comfort of sweat pants; for the bursts of creativity that keeping coming from artists and musicians and writers; for the pastors who bring us together virtually week after week with the help of, or in spite of, technology; for the people on social media who keep us dancing, and laughing, and singing, and inspire us to keep on loving and giving; for the journalists who just keep going so we can be informed; for the gratitude shown for health workers and grocery store cashiers and delivery folks; for the loaf of homemade sourdough left on my porch by generous neighbors; for the things I no longer take for granted - I give you thanks. Amen.

SoCal Region Immigrant and Refugee Task Force Zoom Gathering

Join us for an expanded Immigration & Refugee Task Force (IRTF) gathering with partners from across Pacific, San Gabriel, and Riverside Presbyteries
this **Wednesday evening, May 13th at 7pm.**

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83766678474?pwd=dEhFdjJGRHF5NV01bUZuRmhwVWgyQT09>

Meeting ID: 837 6667 8474

Password: 818307

One tap mobile

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+13462487799,,83766678474#,,1#,818307# US (Houston)

Adelanto Visitation Update

By now, I am sure you have heard in the news about conditions inside prisons and immigrant detention facilities like Adelanto, with dozens of people living, sleeping, and eating in close proximity with one another, making social distancing an impossibility, and often lacking tools for basic hygiene. In light of the current health crisis, we have been monitoring updates closely and although there have not yet been any positive cases



confirmed at Adelanto, we are actively advocating for ICE to utilize all available options to reduce the number of people being held at Adelanto and in all immigrant detention centers. Currently, a few people are being released daily as some judges approve humanitarian parole or bond for those with health conditions that make them particularly vulnerable to the virus, and we are anxiously awaiting resolution of ongoing higher court battles that could order the release of hundreds.

We know that accompanying people who are being detained is of vital importance. Though we are not able to be physically present as our facilitated, group visitation remains suspended until further notice, I would encourage that if you have a relationship with someone at Adelanto, please consider maintaining communication through personal letters and cards, and/or phone calls until we are able to visit again. Also, please continue to lift up the people whom we have visited, and all who are detained, in your personal and corporate prayers.



Thanksgiving for PDA Emergency Grant Funds

Especially in these challenging times, we are so grateful that the Presbyterian Church (USA) has the resources and faithful leadership to partner with local churches and presbyteries to respond to the needs of the vulnerable through emergency grant funding from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA). The SoCal Presbyterian Immigrant Accompaniment Ministry is the proud recipient of three such emergency grants, together with our partners in Pacific, San Gabriel, and, most recently, Riverside Presbyteries. Thanks to these funds our ministry is able to:

- Supplement our Immigrant Support Fund to offer additional resources for the asylum-seeking families within the ECAS/Matthew 25 Network who find themselves struggling to cover the costs of meeting basic needs (food, housing, medical, communication, etc.) during the pandemic
- Collaborate with the Adelanto visitation network to provide immediate post-release support for immigrants being released from Adelanto, including professional transportation and emergency hotel lodging in order to safeguard health and respect the safer-at-home orders by not relying on volunteers at this time.
- Secure a storage unit near the Adelanto facility which will be stocked with much needed backpack hygiene/health/travel kits, as well as masks and gloves, to be made available to people as they are released.

How Can You Help?

I continue to be encouraged by the creativity of our churches as they step out in faith to maintain and transform their ministries in light of Coronavirus. A number of congregations and individuals across our presbyteries have already been offering direct accompaniment to asylum seekers, and many provide financial gifts for ongoing support; for this we are incredibly grateful! We are all living in strange and difficult times, and if you're anything like me, many days I struggle to simply attend to the health and wellbeing of my own small, household. Yet, if you or your congregations are wondering, "how can I help?" here are a list of way you can join us in accompanying our immigrant siblings in the midst of this crisis:

∞Give to the SoCal Presbyterian Immigrant Support Fund

to provide ongoing support with the purchase of grocery gift cards, housing, medical, or legal costs, and to meet other basic needs of asylum-seeking families hosted within our communities, as well as to support the emergency post-release efforts at Adelanto detention center.

∞**Donate masks**- If you are sewing face masks, or know someone who is, consider donating adult-sized masks of any style to be used by the taxi drivers and those being released from Adelanto as they continue their travels to be reunited with sponsors and loved ones.

∞**Donate carry-on luggage**- Upon release from Adelanto, any belongings that people came with are returned to them in a plastic garbage bag, and because many anticipate additional air, rail or bus travel after being picked up, many are in need of small pieces of luggage.

If you are interested in sending masks or donating carry-on sized luggage, in good, travel-ready condition (no rips, holes, broken zippers, etc.), contact Kristi Van Nostran at PresbyWelcome@gmail.com.

∞**Direct Accompaniment**- with safer-at-home orders in place and to safeguard the health of volunteers, we have had to modify our efforts to provide direct accompaniment through hosting and support circle participation. However, as more people gain release from detention, even with the additional grant funds we have recently received to expand our efforts with professional transportation and/or emergency overnight hotel lodging, we will likely not meet the needs.

If your church or your family have a separate space (i.e. manse, back-house, etc.) and would like to consider providing emergency shelter, or to be connected to one of our (online) support circles to accompany asylum seekers hosted in our communities and those leaving detention, contact Kristi at: PresbyWelcome@gmail.com.

Thank you for continuing to seek out, welcome, and accompany the most vulnerable among us, even as we try to offer added care for our members who find themselves anxious and struggling as well. Let's connect cautiously, but let's not stop being community!! Paz y bien,

Kristi



Presbyteries of the Pacific
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