

Immigration and Customs Enforcement Encounter Policy

Due to the increased efforts to deport Immigrants by the Trump administration and examples of indiscriminate detaining of immigrants by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) regardless of immigration status, we are very much aware that some of our Sudanese members, as well as other members and friends of our church, may be at risk of an encounter with ICE.

We are also conscious of the fact that the church is a semi-public building, and that should ICE come to our church on a weekday, staff are most likely going to be the ones to encounter ICE first. Thus, this policy was developed to guide staff, and others, in how to prepare for and respond to such an encounter. This policy was developed based on information from local immigration legal advocates and our denominational immigration office.

We do not want to be responsible for checking people's immigration status, and we don't want anyone to be afraid to attend events or meetings here for fear that ICE may target them here. Our hope is that First Presbyterian Church be a safe place for anyone who comes through our doors, regardless of immigration status.

Therefore, all outside doors will be kept locked at all times, except for Sunday morning worship services, when necessary for church events, or as arranged with outside groups.

If ICE officers (or anyone acting in that capacity) comes to the church, we will:

1. comply with all applicable laws
2. exercise our right to refuse entry without a judicial warrant,
3. exercise our right to not answer questions unless legally required to,
4. exercise our right to not acknowledge the presence of any individual they are looking for or have a warrant for, unless that warrant also gives them legal rights to enter the building.

If ICE officers (or anyone acting in that capacity) come to one of our locked doors, the doors shall not be opened for them unless they present a properly signed and completed judicial warrant giving them access.

In order to examine the warrant without unlocking doors, we will avoid tripping the door lock (thus inadvertently unlocking it) and ask ICE agents to meet us at one of the windows in

the East Entrance where they can hold the warrant up to a window for us to examine without unlocking a door.

Should an ICE officer or agent enter the church, with or without a proper judicial warrant, without our express permission, such as due to a door being unlocked, or with our permission, it is advisable to record what happens. It is advisable to:

- a. let the ICE officer know you are recording them
- b. write down as many details as can be recalled, including names and IDs of ICE officers.

Ultimately it is up to the individual confronting ICE officers as to how they respond in any given situation. If at any time the individual feels unsafe, the safety of our staff, members and adherents is more important than this policy.

In the case of outside individuals or groups using our building, we will:

1. communicate our Immigration and Customs Enforcement Encounter Policy to them,
2. inform them that when they are meeting in the building they have special permission to access necessary private areas for their events,
3. inform them that if doors are unlocked, or if they open a door, ICE can legally enter the premises.

Our Congregation will be informed of this policy and the reasoning behind it, clarifying that members and regular participants have permission to enter private areas when they are in the building.

Adopted February 23, 2025