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Public Statement on the separation of children from their families at the US-Mexico border

The LWF Council, meeting in Geneva, Switzerland from 27 June to 2 July, 2018, under the theme “freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8), deliberated and adopted the following message to the LWF member churches:

Separation of children from their families at the US-Mexico border

Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt (Matthew 2:14)

- (1) The LWF Council expresses its deep distress about the situation on the US-Mexico border that has resulted in migrant children being separated from their families. Such a practice is cruel, inhumane and results in profound and damaging, long-term effects, especially psychological, on these children and their parents.
- (2) While the US Administration’s policy has been modified recently, the Council shares the concern of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America about what the revised policy “does and does not guarantee. There is no provision for reuniting children already separated from their families, nor for children whose parents have already been deported.”
- (3) Like the LWF Council’s 2015 resolution on migrants, the Council commends prophetic voices on the treatment of migrants, such as that of Bishop Eaton who convened 20 other U.S. ecumenical and inter-religious partners and issued a joint statement in early June 2018.
- (4) The LWF Council calls upon the US Administration to review its policies towards asylum seekers, stop detaining families and utilize community-based alternatives to detention as piloted by the U.S.-based Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS).

- (5) The Council is deeply aware of the precarious situation of migrants in other parts of the world, such as Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia and the Pacific. It expresses its hope that the negotiations underway toward agreement on a Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration will lead to better conditions, international cooperation and security for migrants and their families.
- (6) The Council appreciates Presiding Bishop Eaton's recent counsel: "In his explanation of the Lord's Prayer in the Small Catechism, Martin Luther reminds us that good government is part of our daily bread. As Lutherans and as citizens, we can work with elected officials toward humane, just, and compassionate solutions."