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Teaching Elder Terry Kukuk, Executive Presbyter

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Dear Siblings in Christ throughout the Presbytery of the Miami Valley,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

As Presbyterians, we are a connectional people who have been bound together by Jesus Christ. What affects one of us, affects all of us. What happens to our neighbors, happens to all of us. The effects may be felt acutely and at other times are hardly noticeable. As people of faith, we have a variety of gifts that are intended to build up the church, challenge us to grow in our faith, and bear witness to the good news that through Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, God is making all things new.

We find ourselves in a time when divisions run deep. These divisions touch our convictions and influence our actions and relationships. A steady loop of new stories across the board creates a loud level of noise that can be deafening and irritating, setting us on edge. People of faith can wrestle with one another on how or even if to respond to events happening around us. Times like these challenge us to call upon God so that we can meet this time with wisdom and courage as we dwell in Scripture, seeking to love God, our neighbors, and ourselves while tending to justice, mercy, and kindness.

The announcement that ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) agents are anticipated to arrive in Springfield, Ohio due to the 20-25% of the population that are Haitians living there while holding Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is a time for us, the Presbytery of the Miami Valley, to find ways to respond that reflect God's desire for us to live in relationship with one another while bearing witness to the ways we are called upon to love our neighbors. This can include one or more of the following:

1. Pray for God to protect the Springfield community that no violence of any kind erupts.
2. Connect directly with the faith community in Springfield. One way to do that is through the G92 Love Thy Neighbor group at this link [G92 - A faith-rooted movement for immigrant justice](#)
3. Learn more about the PCUSA's long history of immigration advocacy that dates back to 1893 by following this link [Immigration Issues | Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\)](#)
4. Have a conversation in your congregation around issues of immigration that allows your faith community to grow, learn, and act.

Additionally, the members of the Leadership Council will continue to find ways for our presbytery to gather for times of learning, conversation, and prayer so that we are prepared to navigate complex situations and engage hard conversations as disciples of Jesus Christ.

In confidence that God is both calling and equipping us for a time such as this,

MWS Lawrence Bartel, Moderator of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley
MWS Diane Ziegler, Vice-Moderator of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley
CRE Janet Miller, Moderator of Leadership Council of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley
MWS Terry Kukuk, Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley