



This is an invitation to join others in a call to action, advocating for our immigrant and refugee community. Scan the code for the letter and sign on using the link at the end of the letter.

A Time for Light to Shine

Epiphany in the Christian tradition signifies that God has come to make his glory known to the world in and through Jesus Christ—that the Light has come. Other traditions, too, have celebrations of light. In Hinduism, Diwali is the Festival of Lights, symbolizing the victory of light over darkness. In Judaism, Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, commemorates the miracle of the oil lamp that lasted eight days. In Asia, the Lantern Festival occasions the lighting of lanterns to guide ancestors' spirits home.

In West Michigan, we invite those of any tradition to focus on our community in this season of light. Moreover, we ask all to join those of us who have signed this declaration in taking action, claiming an end to this present time of fear and despair as did the prophet in the first two verses of the 60th chapter of Isaiah:

*Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.*

Whereas our metropolitan area seems to be covered with a thick heaviness we, the undersigned, call for the curtains of evil to be drawn back and the light of goodness and acceptance to flood our neighborhoods and homes.

- We call on ICE and all of those working with ICE to be people of the light, operating in the daylight and removing masks.
- We call on ICE and all of those working with ICE to allow each person they encounter to shed light upon their status—those who have passed initial asylum interviews and await their day in court, those refugees who have resettled in this area, those who are black or brown and are subject to racial profiling.
- We call on ICE and all of those working with ICE to be caring light to families who may have one or more members who are undocumented.
- We call on commissioners and legislators at the local, state and federal level to use their light to review and hold accountable actions that dehumanize our neighbors and fracture their families.
- We call on commissioners and legislators at the local, state and federal level to cast light on the racist actions that have extinguished the light of hope the United States' resettlement program has provided to refugees around the world.
- We call on legislators at the state and federal level to remove obstacles to H1B (specialized workers) and F1 (student) visas so that these newcomers can shine their lights in ways that further not only their own skills, but advance our country.
- We call on houses of worship to be the light they are called to be, casting light on evil and flooding our community with acceptance and goodwill.
- We call on houses of worship to be the light they are called to be, assisting those who are burdened, because of anti-immigrant propaganda and activity, with material, emotional, and spiritual support.
- We call on houses of worship to provide open doors and acceptance to those desperately in need of hope and sanctuary.
- We call on teachers and other community workers to give hope and assuredness to children who have fears and anxieties about what may be happening to them and their families.
- We call on schools and other community institutions to be beacons of light to a fearful generation, showing love, grace, and acceptance.
- We call on leaders of communities to be speakers of truth, accurately labeling the darkness that surrounds us and calling for a new era of light that will shine brightly in our home, neighborhoods, and communities.

We, the undersigned, stand together with the call to action contained in this letter. We invite you to join by signing on with this link: [A Time for Light to Shine](#).