

You Know ... “Hands and Feet”

On July 28th Rev. Dr. Mirjam Hass-Mechior and I, as part of a 20-person group of other regional denomination leaders, business representatives, and non-profit justice organization leaders, met with Mike Mower, Senior Advisor of Community Outreach and Intergovernmental Affairs for Governor Spencer J. Cox at the capital. We met to urge Gov. Cox to do everything in his and the state’s power to preclude the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) from opening any ICE detention centers in Utah. The Presbytery of Utah wrote and published a letter opposing the proposed DHS detention center earlier this spring: <https://www.pbyutah.org/resources/presbytery-statements/191-statement-2026-1/file>. I also signed a letter from the Utah Values Coalition in June protesting this monstrous, windowless warehouse where DHS planned to house 10,000 detainees.

The opening paragraph of The Presbytery of Utah’s letter states:

We speak as a community bound by Christ’s admonition to love our neighbors. We recognize the inherent dignity of every human being, all of whom are created in the image of God. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus consistently aligned himself with those who were marginalized, displaced, and treated as outsiders. His teachings compel us to respond with compassion, justice, and hospitality toward all people—especially those who are the most vulnerable.

As a state, we are all too familiar with the illegal and unconstitutional detention of persons without due process and absent recognition of our shared humanity. We are home to the Topaz Mountain incarceration camp. It stands today as a monument to the pain and suffering our nation unjustly inflicted on 12,000 persons of Japanese descent in the 1940’s.

This group of 20 appreciated the Governor’s office hosting and listening to us and our concerns for the ethical, Christian treatment of all in our nation, including immigrants who are here both legally and without permission.

Mike Morrow shared that he and the Governor heard our concerns about the injustices ICE commits and our opposition to this planned mega-detention center and any detention center in Utah. But he also shared that the office also hears from those who insist that all immigrants who are here illegally must be rounded up and deported. Their frequent position is that we must uphold our laws.

Such voices fail to mention or acknowledge that the “rounding up” of immigrants in our country without proper documentation is generally done in violation of our country’s laws. ICE denies court orders and routinely violates the constitutional rights of those they detain. And, as Christians, how do we regard man-made laws? As Christians, would we see adhering to Jim Crow laws as following Christ’s teachings? All laws are not ethical. The US’s immigration policies have been a mess since the 1980s, and Congress has consistently failed to create proper policies. Often, people are “rounded up” while trying to follow our country’s existing policies.

In light of the fact that the Governor's office hears from persons promoting what amounts to the unethical treatment of immigrants, I urge all who come to Trinity Presbyterian Church to raise their voice in favor of honoring the God-given dignity and ethical treatment of immigrants. Call, write letters, and send emails to the Governor and our representatives in Congress and the Senate opposing ICE detention centers in our state (any and all) as well as the proper ethical treatment of immigrants. It is important that our Christian-values-based voice is heard, and heard loudly.

Our elected officials don't make their email addresses public. To contact them via email, you are directed to private web-based messaging applications, each official with his or her own system. Below are links to these pages where you can leave comments for our elected officials.

Governor Spencer J. Cox: <https://cs.utah.gov/s/submit>

Senator Mike Lee: <https://www.lee.senate.gov/contact>

Senator John Curtis: <https://www.curtis.senate.gov/share-your-opinion/>

Representative Blake Moore (1st District): <https://blakemoore.house.gov/contact/email-blake?clear>

Representative Celeste Maloy (2nd District): <https://maloy.house.gov/contact/email-me.htm>

Representative Dr. Mike Kennedy (3rd District):
<https://mikekenedy.house.gov/contact/email-me>

Representative Burgess Owens (4th District): <https://owens.house.gov/contact>

All of these links were derived through a [utah.gov](https://www.utah.gov) website that also provides phone numbers if you wish to call these officials:
<https://www.utah.gov/government/contactgov.html>.

[Note: Weber and Davis counties are in District 2, Morgan county is District 3, and SLC is District 1 - usually. To be certain of who your rep is, search whosmyrep.org. For some reason, in West Valley City, my rep is District 2, not District 1.]

As Christians, we are frequently confronted with enormous injustice in the world and our lives. Often we may think we are too small to help bring about justice in such situations. But, that is our call in following Christ: to stand with the in-breaking of God's Kingdom upon this flawed existence, to promote justice. Our singular voice may be small, but when we speak in tens, hundreds, and thousands of messages, we have an impact.

Case in point. As of the July 28th meeting with Mike Mower, DHS had *indicated* it was not going to build the SLC mega-detention center, but had failed to officially declare it was stopping the project. Just this week (August 20th of this writing), DHS has finally bowed to the pressure/voices “we the people” have raised and declared they are not going to build the detention center and are putting the building up for sale on the appropriate governmental website (after spending \$145 million for a building appraised at only \$100 million).

Let us flood our representatives with positive messages about the compassionate and ethical treatment of all immigrants - phone, write, and email. Act, and be the *hands and feet of Christ* in our time and community!

Peace,
Pastor Scott