



# Zion Lutheran Church of Pittsfield

Never perfect. Always beloved. Always being made new.

## Zion Lutheran Church Building and Immigration Enforcement Policy

### Background and Faith Principles

Zion adheres to the reaffirmation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA)'s 2019 Churchwide Assembly's call "for fair and compassionate immigration policies and practices that keep families together"<sup>1</sup> and answers presiding ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's 2025 guidance that "The ELCA does not call for activity contrary to the law but for congregations, leaders and individuals to explore resources addressing how to interpret this memorial to their own contexts."<sup>2</sup> Zion honors and protects the privacy of our beloved congregants and community neighbors who gather in our building. Our faith in God guides us, including many teachings from Scripture:

- "You too must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" Deuteronomy 10:19.
- "Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong" 1 Corinthians 16:13.
- "[Jesus asked] 'Is this a day to save a life or to destroy it?'" Luke 6:9

### Policy for Zion's Building and Immigration Enforcement

Zion's building exists so people can gather safely in community. Zion Lutheran Church and The Common Room welcome all people, regardless of immigration status. Therefore, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Department of Homeland Security (DHS) or Local Law Enforcement (LLE) who appear to be acting in support of ICE/CBP are subject to the following restrictions:

- ICE, CBP, DHS, and LLE acting in support of ICE/CBP ***without a signed judicial warrant*** are allowed only in public areas on Zion's property, but they are not allowed to stop, search, or arrest people in those areas without such a warrant.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://elcamediaresources.blob.core.windows.net/cdn/wp-content/uploads/Recommitments\\_toward\\_Compassionate\\_Immigration\\_Policies\\_SPR19.pdf](https://elcamediaresources.blob.core.windows.net/cdn/wp-content/uploads/Recommitments_toward_Compassionate_Immigration_Policies_SPR19.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://elcamediaresources.blob.core.windows.net/cdn/wp-content/uploads/immigration\\_executive\\_orders.pdf](https://elcamediaresources.blob.core.windows.net/cdn/wp-content/uploads/immigration_executive_orders.pdf)



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- ICE, CBP, DHS, and LLE acting in support of ICE/CBP **with a signed judicial warrant** may access private spaces in the church, but only while accompanied by a Zion Immigration Representative (ZIR).

## Public and Private Spaces

Note: Permanently private spaces will be marked by signage.

Public Space is defined as

- The non-curtained portion of the Sanctuary/Common Room when the church doors are unlocked and the general public is welcome in the building.
- The bathrooms and hallway up to the fire doors.
- All outdoor areas not enclosed by fencing.

Private Space is defined as

- Behind the curtains in the Common Room
- Behind the fire doors in the hallway
- Any construction zone or space leased by Hearthway, Inc.
- **Additionally, the Sanctuary/Common Room is considered private space** when the front door is locked or when a church/Common Room event is not open to the general public.

## Procedures for Common Room Users and Congregants

Should a member of ICE, CBP, DHS, or LLE who appear to be acting in support of ICE/CBP seek access to Zion,

1. Stay calm. Take a breath. Ask them politely to wait at the door.
2. Find or call Pastor Joel immediately at 413-344-8289. If he does not answer, call other ZIRs: Jim McGrath (413-464-5527), Lindsay McCarthy (413-212-6131), and Ingrid Kildiss-Hall (518-821-7650).
3. Return to the agent(s). Explain that you are not authorized to let them into private spaces (see above for list). Say "Please wait. Someone is on their way to help you."
4. If they insist on entering the building or ignore you, remind them that they are not allowed in private spaces without a signed judicial warrant. Only ZIRs are authorized to examine an agent's warrant.



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5. Stay on site until a ZIR arrives
6. As you feel comfortable, record the encounter and alert other community partners.
7. As you feel comfortable, ask the agent(s) to leave.

## Procedures for Zion Immigration Representatives (ZIRs)

Upon being summoned to the church building, ZIRs will

1. Stay calm, breathe, keep themselves grounded in prayer.
2. Call other ZIRs to ensure 2 ZIRs are on site.
3. Ask ICE, CBP, DHS or supporting LLE why they are here and request identification and related documentation including badge numbers and any paperwork.
4. Respectfully offer to converse completely off Zion property. Bring paper, writing implement and phone. Write down badge numbers and other information.
5. Ask to see a signed judicial warrant. If they do not have a warrant signed by a judge, ask them to leave immediately. Should ICE/CBP/DHS/LLE have a viable judicial warrant the ZIRs will carefully read it and adhere to its mandate(s). ZIRs will remain in possession of the warrant, or take a picture/copy of it.
6. Record the interaction using a cell phone.
7. ZIRs will alert fellow faith based entities, our community and immigration professionals immediately.

## Resources

Massachusetts ACLU 2025 overall guidance & resources for places of worship [here](#).

Examples of signage and judicial vs. administrative warrants from WGBH & MA AG [here](#) (scroll down).

Ruse explanation and related information from the Immigration Defense Project [here](#).

Resources for churches, Southern NE Conference of the UCC, [here](#).

ICE signage examples [here](#).