

Beloveds in Christ,

I am persistently heartened by the work and care your churches are providing in this challenging moment. Some of you have parishioners in detention as I write this report. Some have welcomed parishioners home, thanks be to God. And, some are, no doubt, mourning significant losses in your communities... losses to deportation, fear, and violence. At the same time, you are strengthening networks of support across the areas your churches serve in order to love your neighbors better, as Christ demands.

The Maine Immigrants Rights Coalition and the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project are organizations providing significant leadership in our state. It is wise for us to support them and attend to the recommendations and organizing they provide. At the time of writing this report, I have seen the wonderful event Woodfords Congregational Church is co-hosting with the Unitarian Universalist Church of Brunswick on October 24th. The night of music and poetry will be a fundraiser for the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project. What a great example of congregations working together for the good of their neighbors.

I am grateful for Rich Stuart's on-going dedication to attending the Wabanaki Alliance Coalition meeting as a representative for the Maine Conference. He also prepares a monthly round-up of sovereignty-related articles and events that he sends out to those who are interested.

I am also grateful to see the good work the Maine School of Ministry and Pilgrim Lodge are doing around what it means to support Wabanaki sovereignty within their respective ministry sites. In particular, I had the pleasure to co-teach a course with Dean Himschoot this spring that involved organizing a two-session iworkshop with Wabanaki REACH and continuing on with three more sessions with a smaller portion of those attendees who are training for ministry. Lay people, authorized ministers, and people training for ministry all gathered together to learn and to practice living out their faiths in ways that support the sovereignty and thriving of the first peoples of this land.

As we look towards the next year together, a question I hope to bring to this resource team is one of discernment. Is the service that we want to do within the Conference best done as a free-standing resource team? Or, could it be better done working with another part of the Maine Conference? Because there is certainly work to be done! It will be important for our team to consider how best to do it.

Report submitted by Rev. Chrissy Cataldo, co-chair ARRT