

## **Joint Task Force on Immigration First Annual Report**

This church's Joint Task Force on Immigration came into being in early 2009. The "Joint" in the name refers to the fact that its initial sponsorship and membership came from two sources: the Guatemala Committee and the Outreach Committee. Its membership, however, is informal and anyone with an interest in the issue is welcome to participate.

Since this is our first annual report, we will provide a bit of background regarding the committee's activity in the past two years.

The Task Force works from a faith-based understanding of God's unconditional love for all and the Bible's mandate to welcome the stranger. Our denomination, the United Church of Christ, recently wrote of our "extravagant welcome" to all people. In our service almost every Sunday we begin worship with the UCC words, "Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."

In early 2009 the Task Force undertook an educational process of its own members, using the book, [They Take Our Jobs \(and 20 other myths about immigration\)](#), as a study guide. We found our eyes opening and our views changing. We began to understand how human beings came to the United States in a variety of ways, and under a variety of legal arrangements. One of them was slavery, which we now consider abhorrent. We were reminded that when we describe the United States as "a country of immigrants," we think primarily of European Caucasian immigrants.

In the fall of '09 we began an exploration of ways in which we could take action on the basis of our faith stance that all people are welcome here. On the suggestion of a guest leader on immigration issues in the region, we decided to ally ourselves as Task Force members with the Metrowest Worker Center, which has its headquarters in Framingham. Its focus is in supporting immigrant workers, most of whom come from Brazil, Ecuador and Guatemala. We have provided witness of our support and work with them for fair and just employment practices.

In the spring of this year, we decided to invite people of the congregation to join us in exploring issues related to immigration and the appropriate Christian response. We are aware that people in this church approach this

issue from differing values and perspectives. But we believe that a healthy dialogue can help all of us examine our positions and, in the process, consider what our faith calls us to think and do with regard to immigrants.

Our regular meeting date is the second Monday evening of each month at 7:15 in Linden AB. All are welcome.

Please feel free to speak with any of those named here about your interests, questions and concerns.

Clark Taylor and Fred Moder, co-chairs

Cheryl Aglio-Girelli, Jan Davis, Alan Girelli, John Kirk, Val Kistler