



# PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

*an open and affirming congregation*

October 12, 2022

Mayor Jeni Arndt, Mayor Pro Tem Emily Francis  
City Council Members Gutowsky, Pignataro, Canonico, Peel, and Olson  
City Manager Kelly DiMartino  
Fort Collins City Hall  
300 LaPorte Avenue  
Fort Collins, CO 80521

Dear Community Leaders:

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ was founded by Volga Deutsch immigrants who came to this country over a century ago and worked in the sugar beet fields that were the cornerstone of the agriculture-based Fort Collins economy. In 2018, this congregation, founded by immigrants who came here seeking religious and political freedom, declared itself an Immigrant Welcoming Congregation of the United Church of Christ. By so doing, we committed ourselves to “facilitating respectful, compassionate welcome and inclusion of immigrants in our midst.” The Board of Outreach and Mission is authorized to speak for the congregation on matters related to immigration policy and issues affecting immigrants, especially those who do not have the privilege of status.

As a founding Faith Community Member of the Interfaith Solidarity and Accompaniment Coalition of Northern Colorado (ISAAC), we have been part of recent conversations about the urgent need and the community’s fervent desire that the Immigration Legal Fund pilot program, initiated last year, become a permanent part of the Fort Collins city budget. We have also been involved in helping ISAAC raise Legal Support funds to supplement the funds available from the City.

Thus we, along with many others, were delighted to learn that the Fund is now part of the proposed 2023 budget and is fully funded at \$250,000. We are also pleased that the one-year residency requirement has been dropped. This will enable asylum seekers and unaccompanied youth, many of whom are in urgent need of immediate legal assistance, find the help they need.

We celebrate your decision to include the Fund in the 2023 budget, and we urge you to retain full funding as negotiations continue.

We appreciate the challenges you face in serving and leading our complex community. We thank you for the compassionate care that you take as you undergo this annual budgeting ritual. Most of all, we appreciate your efforts to *listen to the community* as you structure the way our city will move forward in support of *all* of its residents in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

Bobbi Wells Hargleroad, Chair

The Board of Outreach and Mission

On behalf of Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ