



North Georgia Black Methodist For Church Renewal

Rev. Dr. Lavell Sanders, President

January 27, 2026

Grace and peace to you,

In recent days, there has been growing concern across the Metro Atlanta community regarding immigration enforcement activity. As Chair of Advocacy for the North Georgia Black Methodist Church Renewal, I write to share guidance and support on behalf of our network of churches committed to justice, compassion, and care for all God's people.

We encourage all members of our communities to remain calm, avoid rumors, and stay informed through trusted sources. At the same time, it is vital to understand that all individuals have rights, regardless of immigration status.

Important Note: The information below is provided for general awareness and educational purposes only and should not be considered legal advice. Laws and policies may change, and individual circumstances may vary. We strongly encourage individuals to consult qualified legal professionals or trusted organizations for guidance specific to their situations.

Know Your Rights

If immigration officers come to your door:

- You do not have to open the door unless they present a warrant signed by a judge.
- You may request that the warrant be slid under the door or held up to a window.
- An ICE warrant is not equivalent to a judge-signed warrant.
- You may state: "*I do not consent to entry.*"

If stopped in public:

- You have the right to remain silent.
- You are not required to answer questions regarding your birthplace or immigration status.
- You may state: "*I choose to remain silent and would like to speak to a lawyer.*"

If detained:

- You have the right to request a lawyer.
- You have the right not to sign any documents without legal counsel.
- You have the right to inquire about a bond hearing and to make a phone call.

We encourage families to prepare by:

- Keeping copies of important documents in a secure location.
- Memorizing essential phone numbers.
- Sharing an emergency plan with trusted loved ones.

The North Georgia Black Methodist For Church Renewal also shares information about trusted local organizations that provide legal guidance and community support. For anyone feeling anxious or concerned for themselves or their loved ones, know that you are not alone. Congregations are encouraged to provide prayer, conversation, and connection to resources for their members.

As people of faith, we are called:

- Not to fear, but to love
- Not to panic, but to pray
- Not to turn away, but to care for one another

Let us continue to reflect Christ's compassion, justice, and hospitality within our churches and communities.

Let Us Pray

Gracious and loving God, you are our refuge and our strength. Calm anxious hearts, protect families, and surround all who are fearful with your peace. Give us wisdom, courage, and compassion, and help us to be churches where every person is treated with dignity, love, and care. Guide our steps in justice and mercy, and keep us rooted in your perfect love, which casts out fear.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

With faith and solidarity,

Rev. Dr. Deborah S. Holloway
Chair of Advocacy
North Georgia Black Methodist For Church Renewal