

# The GATHERING

*"Do not be afraid, for I am with you, I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west"*

—Isaiah 43:5-7

## A conversation with my children

My children had questions on the ride home from a simple play date—the running and giggling, the sneaked Laffy Taffy, the velcro dartboard—and the moment they each held baby Julián for the first time.



Image: oil painting by Adrienne De Forrest of Boulder Mennonite Church

"Mom, will our friends get taken away?" my eight-year-old, Bennett, asked.

"I hope not," I said. "I really, really hope not."

"But how would they do it?"

"ICE agents," I explained. "They work for the government. They could

come to the door. They could take our friends to detention."

"In handcuffs?"

"In zip ties—faster and cheaper."

"Like the ones in Daddy's shop?"

"Yes."

"But why would they go to jail if they haven't done anything wrong?" five-year-old Owen asked.

"Exactly," I said, my voice catching.

"They haven't done anything wrong. They just wanted to move to a new place. It makes no sense."

*Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you...*

"What would we do if ICE came?" Bennett pressed.

"We wouldn't open the door. If they got in somehow, we would take a video. We would warn neighbors. We would call people who could help. We would do whatever we could."

"Can't we force them to stop?"

"It wouldn't work." Silence.

"But this is why we color posters, why we call our leaders, why we send care packages," I continued. "This is why we gather with people who worry about things we don't. Your experience of living in Colorado is not everyone's experience. Some families live with fear every day. This breaks God's heart."

*I will say to the north, 'Give them up,' and to the south, 'Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the ends of the earth...'*

"God is with people who have moved here recently," I told them. "And that's where we want to be too."

Amy Zimbelman  
Conference Minister of Mountain States  
Mennonite Conference.

