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Nativity statues of the baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph, which usually mark Christmas, were incarcerated Tuesday behind a barbed-wired-topped, chain-link fence on the lawn of the cathedral of the Episcopal Church's Indianapolis Diocese.

The caged holy family protests President Trump's zero-tolerance policy, which has resulted in holding families arrested near the U.S.-Mexico border in detention centers, said the Rev. Stephen Carlsen, dean and rector of Christ Church Cathedral.

"I know what the Bible said," Carlsen said. "We're supposed to love our neighbors as ourselves."

The Rev. Lee Curtis, who also serves at Christ Church and came up with the idea for the demonstration, said the biblical trio was a family of refugees seeking asylum in Egypt after Jesus' birth.

"An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, 'Arise, take the young child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him,'" according to the New King James Version of Matthew 2:13-14. "When he arose, he took the young child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt."

Said Curtis: "This holy family is every family, and every family is holy."

The church set up the caged nativity scene Monday night as part of its #EveryFamilyIsHoly campaign.

This is not the first time the downtown Indianapolis church has weighed in on social issues. The Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis has more than 9,000 members in almost 50 churches across the southern two-thirds of Indiana.

The clergy of the self-described "progressive" Episcopal congregation, Carlsen and Curtis, attended the Families Belong Together rally Saturday to protest family separation and detention.

Curtis also brought a group of youth in March to the March for Our Lives rally in Washington. Carlsen attended the Indianapolis rally at the Indiana Statehouse with a group from the church.

The church has become progressive in recent years, especially since deciding to marry same-sex couples when Indiana legalized such marriage in 2014, Carlsen said.

Its immigrant advocacy stems from the church's diverse congregation, he said.

"This is an easy one for us," said Carlsen, a member of the Faith in Indiana group that advocates for immigrants. "It doesn't feel like we're out campaigning. This is about people I know and love, and I'm going to stand with them."

Mark Reckart, who is a member of Christ Church Cathedral, said he is proud of his church for putting up the demonstration.

"It's a perfect way to show what's happening. It's families in cages," Reckart said. "This is a family that resonates with a lot of people."

People walking by said the display was a powerful way to bring awareness to the situation at the border.

"I think it's bold," said Matthew Roberts of Indianapolis. "It just makes me think about those families that are separated and pray for them."

"They were one of the first refugees," said Aija Evonen, a visitor from Finland. "It's a good sign. I appreciate it."

"I think Jesus intended everybody to get along and be free. Nobody should be enslaved," said Randy Sylvia of Indianapolis. "I just think it's wrong."

Fred Andrews, a sexton at Christ Church Cathedral, said he hopes the demonstration reminds people to vote in the next election.

"It's sad," Andrews said. "Somewhere along the line, I guess, just hoping for a better life has been lost because it's politics involved."

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