

## Who is Our Neighbor?

Kate Henreckson  
*Dordt College*

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More than 15 community leaders joined Dr. Gabriel Salguero in the Campus Center Board Room to discuss immigration policy and Christian hospitality.

# WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

*"There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear." (1 John 4:18)*

On October 1, standing before a packed B.J. Haan Auditorium, Dr. Gabriel Salguero gave a talk that was striking, humorous, and intensely convicting. His talk was titled "Beyond Despair: Lessons from Narnia and the Gospel."

"Look at me," Salguero asked his audience earnestly. He gestured to his face, his dark eyes and brown skin. "Look at me. *Mira me*. What do you see? Am I your ally or your foe? Am I a glorious future or a dystopic dread? In my church, I have both sheriffs and state troopers, undocumented immigrants and DACA recipients. People ask me whether something happens that allows these people to pass the peace of Christ, to see each other not as labels, but as brothers and sisters. Yes, I reply. *It is love.*"

Salguero is president of the National Latino Evangelical Coalition (NALEC), a coalition of Hispanic evangelical churches and nonprofits committed to gospel-centered advocacy. He has also served on the White House Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships Advisory Council and is a pastor of a multicultural church of 4,000 in Orlando.

In the evening, Salguero participated in a panel discussion titled "Who Is Our Neighbor: Immigration, Justice, and

Christian Hospitality." The panel also included an immigration lawyer, a DACA recipient, and a pastor of a local Catholic church. The evening event was highly attended, with an engaged audience seeking to understand how immigration policy affects our undocumented neighbors, and what Christian hospitality

*"Love is a decision that you will respect the image of God in the other, no matter how different."*

—Dr. Gabriel Salguero, First Mondays speaker

demands of us as kingdom citizens.

The next morning, a group of people from Sioux Center and the surrounding communities gathered in the board room, sharing coffee and conversation. Around the table were men and women representing education, public health, the business sector, mental health, and faith communities, including some key Latino voices.

John Lee, a Dordt board member and local pastor, opened the conversation by posing three questions. What is God doing in our current time and place? What has God specifically equipped each of us to do in our respective callings to join in that work? How do we best work with others in order to accomplish the rest?

"We are all working with similar goals, but we don't often know what others are

doing," says Lee. "This meeting was a gift for our community. It allowed us to learn from Dr. Salguero's wisdom and insight, but also to learn from one another, as together we seek ways to serve our neighbors in our respective callings."

Salguero's presentations all focused around love, which he says is the highest of Christian virtues.

"Love is a decision that you will respect the image of God in the other, no matter how different. Fear distorts your reality. But perfect love casts out fear—it allows you to see me and me to see you. You at Dordt—will you be able to see differently? We are the ones the world is waiting for, to put on gospel lenses, to replace fear with love."

KATE HENRECKSON

