

**Why are we talking about sanctuary?**

Since 2014, the United States, through the Department of Homeland Security, has increased efforts to deport undocumented persons living in the United States. These efforts have intensified in the past four months. It appears that the federal government is increasing the number of agents authorized to arrest and detain undocumented immigrants, including persons who have lived in the United States for many years. Many have families, including children who are U.S. citizens, pay taxes, and contribute substantially to their communities. Some, who were brought here as small children, have never known any life other than their life here.

In 2011, before the current surge, the United States Customs and Immigration Enforcement (ICE) issued a memorandum declaring schools, hospitals, churches and other religious institutions, and religious ceremonies such as weddings and funerals, to be “sensitive locations” in which ICE agents were not to make arrests, conduct interviews, do searches or engage in surveillance simply for the purpose of immigration enforcement. Later this memorandum included the United States Border Patrol.

Thus, communities of faith are among the few places where an immigrant need not fear apprehension by ICE or Border Patrol simply because she or he does not have proper documentation. The current estimate is that 40% of immigrants without proper documentation came to the United States legally, but their visas may have expired or do not apply to their current situation (for example, a student who is here on a student visa but is now working.) At most recent count, 800 communities of faith are now “sanctuary” congregations, allowing their status as a “sensitive location” to be used by immigrants.

**Is there a need for sanctuary space in Duluth?**

Duluth has a surprising number of immigrants: our hospitals and universities bring in students, professors, and medical personnel from all over the world. Additionally, Peace leadership and members of the sanctuary team are aware of specific individuals in the community who are actively seeking legal standing at this time.

Ultimately, though, even if there were \*zero\* need for sanctuary in our community, the sanctuary team believes that this declaration is a strong symbolic statement to our community and to our various jurisdictions that the immigration system is unjust. As a Just Peace church, Peace UCC will not be silent in the face of this injustice.

**Who would Peace consider taking into sanctuary?**

Sanctuary will be extended to immigrants in need of additional time in the process of receiving documentation or naturalization. They will need to be actively engaged in the immigration process and facing a threat of immediate deportation (Example: A person who receives a deportation notice while waiting to hear back from an appeal). The person will continue working with an immigration lawyer while they are sheltered at Peace with the end goal

of receiving documentation/naturalization and returning to the community.

Sanctuary will be offered to either individuals or entire families depending on the need, though many families have mixed status (one or both parents are undocumented while children are legal citizens, for instance), so these will be determined on a case by case basis.

### **Is it against the law for a church to provide sanctuary to undocumented immigrants?**

No. As current law and past precedent stand, declaring Peace a Sanctuary Congregation and/or offering shelter in our building (which is considered a sensitive location) is legal. This policy of sensitive locations can change at any time.

### **How is offering sanctuary different from “harboring” undocumented immigrants?**

This distinction is important because “harboring” is breaking the law. Sanctuary is different from harboring because:

1) Peace will be public about its sanctuary status and the people being sheltered here. Harboring generally involves hiding people in secret, and we will be transparent with our community and the authorities.

2) Peace will not attempt to prevent authorities with the proper warrants from entering the premises if they come to remove an immigrant in sanctuary (though for ICE agents to do this would be a breach of the practice of sensitive spaces).

### **What steps will be taken to protect church staff, volunteers, and members?**

Peace Church will run background checks on immigrants seeking sanctuary, and decisions will be made on a case by case basis. Persons will be allowed to stay depending on the results of the background check and the comfort level of staff and volunteers.

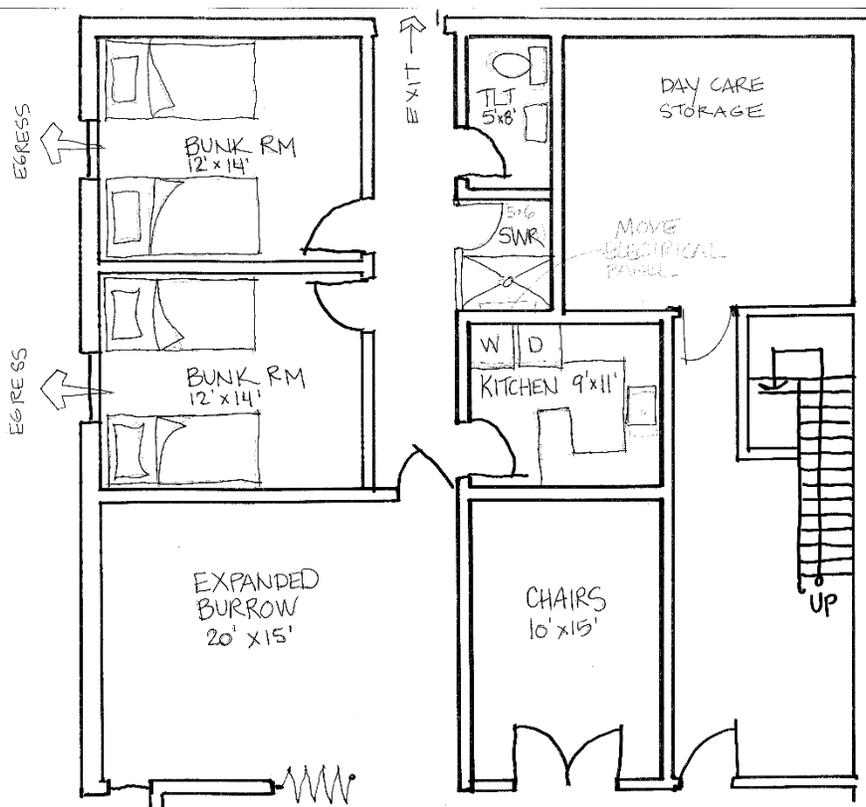
### **How will this impact Peace church financially?**

Expenses will fall under two categories: building improvements and ongoing Sanctuary expenses.

The building subgroup is working on preliminary plans and costs for building upgrades in the area known as “the garage.” Ongoing expenses will be primarily for utilities and food. Peace Church will not assume the costs of legal representation of the person(s) in sanctuary.

### **What building changes would be needed?**

Additional bathroom space with shower and a laundry facility is already in Peace’s long range plan. At least one shower and changing area needs to be ADA compliant. For the purposes of sanctuary, Peace would need to add a living area that can be secure from the rest of the building. Space available in the building could be renovated as pictured here:



Conceptual drawing by Gail Blum

**What are the legalities of building a living space in the church (zoning rules, building codes)?**

It is currently not legal for our church in an R-1 zoned location to have a living space within or on the property. However, the sanctuary team is requesting the necessary changes from the city to allow for this. In the meantime Peace can proceed with adding space for showers, washer/dryer, etc.

**Could this renovated space be used for other church activities (ie; youth group overnight accommodations, homeless shelter overflow space, etc.)?**

When not actively used as sanctuary for an individual or family, the space could be used for alternative purposes as deemed suitable by church council.

**Do we limit access from this space to the rest of the church (and if so how)?**

Limiting access would make this a private space and offer an immigrant added safety, since authorities would need a signed warrant in order to enter the space. Additionally, the church's general use and persons in sanctuary would have more limited impact on each other.

**How would using this space impact the day care?**

Cornerstone Daycare is aware of these conversations and plans and is in conversation with the staff and leadership of Peace regarding any potential conflict.

**How will the building renovations be paid for?**

The showers and laundry are already included in the long range plan. The congregation can approve the use of building funds as part of this effort.

**What might this cost?**

A very rough, and preliminary estimate would be from \$20,000 to \$45,000. Request for Proposals would have to be done to get bids from contractors.

**Once the building is ready and Peace takes in someone seeking sanctuary, where are there funds for supplies such as laundry and dish soaps, cleaning supplies, food, etc.?**

Sanctuary supporting congregations, CHUM, private and business donations will all be pursued to meet the financial costs of providing sanctuary. The sanctuary team is in conversation with as many as 10 other congregations interested in helping with this ministry. Help may include financial support, in kind donations and/or volunteer assistance.

The slight increase in utilities will be incorporated into the Church budget. Also, the church council could decide in their Fall, 2017 budgetary process to include a line item for the support of Sanctuary. Additional fundraising activities will be considered (i.e. summer picnics, rummage sales, fall harvest dinner and dance).

**Could Jubilee funds be used for this?**

Yes, if approved, with a cap of \$5,000 per project. It is not envisioned that Jubilee funds would be used for ongoing Sanctuary funding. It is uncertain if the Jubilee funds will be sought for building renovations.

**Would we expect the person(s) in Sanctuary to contribute toward their living expenses?**

This will be determined on a case by case basis based on the person's (and family's) financial means.

**What about immigrant children who might need to be enrolled in school, have special needs, require transportation to activities, etc.?**

The sanctuary team would need to evaluate this on a case by case basis. Although sanctuary can include entire families, many cases suggest only one individual from a family (mostly likely one of the adults) will be in Sanctuary. The rest of the family visits as often as they like. There may be family needs for which congregational members and community volunteers may make contributions (financial or in kind).

**Does a documented person need to be in the building with the person/family 24/7?**

This may need to be evaluated in each case, but the team anticipates that this could be a need. Volunteers may be Peace members or members of sanctuary supportive congregations. All volunteers would receive some orientation and training related to Peace’s building and immigrant rights.

**Is there a person/team on call to address emergencies/accidents/injuries? What is the process if something like this happens? How about transportation for other normal errands?**

It is anticipated that the sanctuary team would enlist volunteers with specialized skills who are willing to be called in an emergency—for example, to evaluate an injury or illness. The person in sanctuary loses the protection afforded by the “sensitive location” status of the church when being transported for routine errands; however, there is no legal risk to a volunteer providing transportation.

**Will there need to be a coordinator of weekly services for the family/individual? Who will do this?**

Details will need to be worked out, but the sanctuary team expects to designate several persons to share the responsibility of serving as volunteer coordinators.

**When might Peace have someone in sanctuary?**

Summer events are being planned so that members of Peace can learn more about immigration and sanctuary. If Peace members vote to become a sanctuary church, and the zoning requirements are met, renovation of the living space can begin. About a month after that, Peace can probably offer sanctuary space.

**Can church families host undocumented immigrants if the need is there?**

Private homes are not regarded as “sensitive locations” and therefore are not sanctuary in the same way as the church building.

**How long do we expect a family or individual to be in sanctuary - living in the church?**

Some could be temporary short stays--a few days/weeks to more than a year. More and more frequently, there are stories about immigrants, lacking sanctuary, being deported without due process.

**Are there resources available?**

Among the most helpful resources to date are the following:  
 ISAIAH, an interfaith organization in the Twin Cities  
 The Immigrant Law Center in the Twin Cities

[www.sanctuarynotdeportation/resources.html](http://www.sanctuarynotdeportation/resources.html)

Included on Peace's website are the following public documents:

Toolkit for Sanctuary Churches by the United Methodist Church

Interfaith Toolkit for Sanctuary Churches by the Unitarian Universalist Association

ACLU FAQ for Sanctuary Churches

Legal Counsel for Sanctuary Churches is being provided pro bono by Dorsey and Whitney, a large and international law firm with offices in Minneapolis, through Isaiah

### **What are the next steps?**

June 18, 9:30 a.m., An opportunity for questions and conversations, Conference room

June 25, 11:30 a.m., Taco Bar lunch and presentation/conversation with the Rev. Grant  
Stevensen of ISAIAH

Questions submitted to [office@peaceucc.org](mailto:office@peaceucc.org) will be passed on to the Sanctuary Team

### **Peace Sanctuary Exploration Team**

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