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# Sanctuary Toolkit



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# Resistance and Solidarity: Sanctuary Congregations in an Era of Mass Deportation

“When the alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.” Leviticus 19:33-34 and 24:22

“...Let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.” I John 3:18

“They love those who emigrated to them and find not any desire in their hearts of what the emigrants were given, but rather give them preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. Whoever is protected from the greediness of his own soul, then those will be successful.” Surat Al-Hashr 59:9

# Introduction

For decades, immigration has been a contentious issue in the United States. During the U.S. presidential campaign of 2016, the political discourse changed in troubling ways. In the heated language used by Donald Trump, the focus shifted from arguments about **immigration reform** to attacks on **immigrants themselves**. Whether speaking of Muslim refugees from Syria or Mexican migrants seeking a better life, Trump chose to stake his political career on scapegoating these vulnerable populations. Now through Executive Orders, we are seeing the blueprint for a Muslim ban, mass deportations of undocumented people, and expanding the wall on the southern border.

Faith communities are mobilizing. In the face of practices that diminish other human beings, we assert the equal worth and dignity of all children of God. As hate crimes increase, we will resist racism and bigotry in all their forms and make common cause with those most at risk. As immigration policies and the wider system of enforcement tear families apart, we withdraw our consent from such policies and do what we can to stop them, answering the higher call of love of neighbor. The declaration of congregational sanctuary embodies this higher call.

This toolkit was originally created by congregations and coalitions that make up the Sanctuary Movement and was revised and updated by the UU College of Social Justice (UUCSJ), UU Refugee and Immigrant Services and Education (UURISE) and Church World Service (CWS) for use by all faith communities. We hope it will inspire and support you and your community to resist bias and injustice, protect those most at risk, and live out of our core religious values.

# What is Sanctuary?

Sanctuary is a way to be in solidarity with the undocumented community by creating safe spaces for the prophetic voices of immigrant leaders to be lifted up as we together confront unjust laws. Through the Sanctuary Movement, faith communities can powerfully enact and embody their commitment to justice. A church that declares itself a Sanctuary congregation is one willing to engage on a spectrum of solidarity actions including welcoming undocumented people, advocating to help stop deportations, assisting with legal clinics, and physically sheltering an immigrant in danger of immediate deportation.

Sanctuary is one way for faith communities to resist destructive and racially charged policies. When our response includes action grounded in the universal religious values of compassion, hospitality for the stranger, and the fundamental dignity of each person as a child of one God, we help bring about the Beloved Community.

## A Short History of Sanctuary

The original concept of religious spaces as sanctuary for refugees is rooted in Judaism. The ancient Hebrew people allowed temples and even whole cities to declare themselves places of refuge for persons accused of a crime which they may not have committed. This practice allowed those wrongfully accused to escape swift and harsh retribution until they could receive a fair trial. In the late Roman Empire, fugitives sometimes found refuge in Christian churches. Later, during the medieval period, the English common law permitted an accused felon to seek sanctuary in a church, and then choose either to submit to trial or to confess and leave the country.

In the United States, there is no law that prevents law enforcement from entering places of worship, but there is a symbolic protection. The first practical case of anything like sanctuary occurred in the years before the Civil War, when slaves fleeing through the Underground Railroad found safety along the way in churches and private homes throughout the country. Another example occurred during the Vietnam War, when some churches opened their doors to young men resisting the draft. This gave temporary refuge to the resistor, and allowed the congregations to amplify their religious message against war.

In the 1980s, refugees from military oppression and civil wars in Central America began to flee to the United States. The U.S. government did not recognize them as political refugees, even though many were threatened by death squads in their home countries. The Sanctuary Movement was born in response, first established at the Southside Presbyterian Church in

Tucson, AZ. At its strongest, the movement included over 500 congregations that collaborated to move refugees through the United States to safe houses and safe congregations.

The Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s reminded the United States government that it was not following its own asylum and refugee laws for the refugees of Central America. Some clergy members in Arizona and elsewhere were charged with felonies for their involvement in offering sanctuary. The movement declared victory when the U.S. government awarded refugee status and legal asylum to those fleeing violence in Central America.

Several decades later, beginning in 2007, the New Sanctuary Movement took shape among coalitions of congregations in cities throughout the country. As immigration raids in neighborhoods and work places escalated in a climate of political paralysis for immigration reform, these congregations opened their doors to provide refuge to those facing deportation.

The New Sanctuary Movement helped win prosecutorial discretion through the Morton memo in 2011<sup>1</sup> and President Obama's Executive Actions on Immigration in 2014,<sup>2</sup> along with local and state ordinances restricting police collaboration with immigration enforcement. Together, these policies helped stop thousands of deportations through case-by-case advocacy. However, under the administration of President Trump, these policies have been rolled back. New policies have been introduced that seek to prevent entry for the tens of thousands of refugees fleeing violence and death threats in their own countries.

## Sanctuary and resistance in the era of President Trump

In the United States, immigration is addressed and controlled at the federal level. Though state and local governments can influence the American immigration system through enforcement and cooperation, it is federal leaders whose decisions have the widest impact in the system. With the inauguration of Donald Trump as President in January 2017, we have entered uncharted political territory. In addition to the President himself, senior administration leaders, including Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly and Attorney General Jeff Sessions, have been vocal in their intent to reverse many Obama era policies and step-up a hardline approach to immigration enforcement.

The first weeks of the Trump administration set in motion some ominous changes. On February 20th, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued two memoranda: "Implementing the President's Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvement Policies", and

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<sup>1</sup> June 2011 memorandum from US Immigration and Customs Enforcement Director John Morton: <http://www.ice.gov/doclib/secure-communities/pdf/prosecutorial-discretion-memo.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> 2014 Executive Actions on Immigration resource page: <http://www.uscis.gov/immigrationaction>

“Enforcement of the Immigration Laws to Serve the National Interest”. These are designed to implement President Trump’s Executive Orders on [border security](#) and on [interior enforcement](#). The memos solidify the intention of the Trump administration to deport people at mass levels; they have generated tremendous fear and, if fully enacted, will exponentially increase family separation.

These initial orders offer a clear indication of the administration’s intention to:

- Hold all undocumented migrants in detention until they can be deported (including women, children, and men convicted of no crimes);
- Broadly widen the deportation net, making prosecutorial discretion guidelines that only in rare circumstance would grant someone a stay of removal
- Build “an impenetrable physical wall on the southern border”; since a border wall already exists along much of this border, this implies further militarization;
- Pressure local and state police to enforce federal immigration actions;
- Punish institutions, cities, and states that declare forms of sanctuary by withholding federal funds;
- Treat Muslims and immigrants from Muslim countries with specific suspicion and further restrict their ability to enter the country
- Vastly expand the number of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents;
- Suspend visas for immigrants from designated countries with Muslim majorities, regardless of refugee status under international law; and
- Punish employers who hire undocumented immigrants.

Throughout his campaign, Trump used language declaring entire populations of people by race, religion and national origin to be criminal or suspect. The immediate uptick in hate speech and assaults around the country in the wake of Trump’s election demonstrates the ways such language emboldens advocates of white supremacy and other hate groups.

As people of faith, we are called to accompany our community members, congregants and neighbors facing deportation. Offering physical sanctuary, or helping another group to offer sanctuary, is one way to help individuals who face this threat.

An offer of physical sanctuary is a way to fight individual cases, advocate to stop deportations, and keep families together. It is a powerful witness to justice and a concrete way in which to live out our faith. But it is a decision that requires thorough preparation and a clear discernment process by the host congregation, in close collaboration with local migrant rights organizations. It also requires great dedication on the part of any person entering as a sanctuary guest, since for

them the experience is tantamount to house arrest: they cannot leave the campus of the church for any reason until their immigration case has been decided without risking arrest.

The Sanctuary Movement has grown and flourished because of the courageous leadership and fierce drive of the undocumented people who have put themselves and their freedom on the line. Their voices, wishes, opinions and leadership should be prioritized and respected throughout the process. Through providing or supporting sanctuary, we are doing this important work **with** them, not **for** them.

Again, the offer of physical sanctuary is just one form of action toward immigration justice: there are many other ways for your congregation to enact our religious values and stand in solidarity with migrants! If your community is unable to offer physical sanctuary, you can still become a support congregation to another church, synagogue or mosque, and engage in vigorous advocacy for immigration justice.

Specific goals of the current Sanctuary Movement include the following:

- Accompany our community members, congregants and neighbors facing deportation through joining the Sanctuary Movement and working to stop deportations case-by-case, and by advocating to stop unjust deportation policies;
- Amplify the moral imperative to stop deportations by lifting up the stories of sanctuary cases and ensuring the prophetic witness of the immigrant taking sanctuary is heard at the national level;
- Defend administrative policies such as [Prosecutorial Discretion](#) so that we can still win stays of deportation case by case and keep sacred spaces and schools protected under the [Sensitive Locations](#) guidelines;
- Work alongside undocumented students to defend the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival program (DACA)
- Support local work to defend Sanctuary cities or local detainer policies and push back against unjust policies that enlist local police to do immigration enforcement such as the Secure Communities (S-Comm) or [287 g in the jails](#)
- Participate and help create protection networks to provide know your rights education, sanctuary space, legal assistance, housing assistance and bail support funds;
- Stop extension and further militarization of the border wall and any attempt to increase criminalization or mandatory sentencing for immigrants;
- Defend asylum seekers by pushing back against expedited removal and helping provide critical resources such as legal assistance so they can defend and win their case.

# Step-by-Step Guide To Sanctuary

*Oh people of Tema, bring water to these thirsty people, food to these weary refugees. They have fled from the sword, from the drawn sword, from the bent bow and the terrors of battle. Isaiah 21:14-15*

## I. Who Are We?

It is important for your community to begin where you are. Your congregation's **physical** reality will impact what you can do: are you a suburban, urban, or rural church? What is the state and setup of your facilities? Are you easy to reach with public transportation? Is your surrounding community diverse racially, economically, and/or culturally?

Your path forward will also be impacted by where most church members are located **culturally**, within the complicated tangles of race, class, privilege, and power, and how willing they are to have honest conversations about these issues. And finally, your work will be influenced by where social justice is typically located within the life of your congregation. Are social change issues regularly lifted up in worship and religious education, or more commonly done within committees or task forces? Is there a history of collective engagement and an institutional framework, or is it left up to individuals to organize?

Within the Sanctuary Movement there is a spectrum of involvement:

- Working to stop deportations and support public Sanctuary cases through advocacy, logistics, food, financial support and organizing vigils
- Declaring your congregation welcoming to undocumented people
- Helping provide legal assistance, shelter, clothes, rides or food to undocumented people
- Offering physical public sanctuary in your congregation to someone in need who is fighting a deportation order

Remember that Sanctuary is just one possible option on a wide spectrum of useful and powerful actions. Here are some examples of actions to advance sanctuary in other ways:

- Include immigration justice as a theme in worship and religious education
- Education within the congregation
- Education beyond the congregation (such as public forums)
- Fundraising for justice organizations or causes
- Direct service (such as tutoring at a school, serving in a soup kitchen, being a language practice

buddy)

- Advocacy (petitions, showing up at the legislature, meeting with the mayor)
- Active involvement in local interracial, immigrant rights, and/or interfaith coalitions
- Building or deepening a relationship with a community organizing or advocacy group that represents and is led by members of a marginalized group in your area
- Divesting church endowment funds from private corporations whose actions are contrary to your values
- Public witness (vigils, protests, hanging Black Lives Matter banners)
- Protest and demonstrations, showing up with the church banner or sign
- Direct civil disobedience (such as publically serving as a Sanctuary church)
- Nonviolent disruption (e.g. physically blocking a deportation attempt)

If your congregation already has a program for social justice but does not yet have a group working on immigration issues, find out what steps you need to pursue in order to initiate a new group.

## II. Laying the Groundwork

### Create powerful, accountable partnerships

No effective action for justice happens in isolation; each victory has been won by many people working together toward their common goal. The decision to offer sanctuary requires your congregation to be in partnership with immigrant rights groups and with other faith communities. **If you do not already have these connections established, now is the time to begin.**

Investigate which other nearby religious communities have an active involvement with immigration justice. Begin with outreach to those of your own faith, but don't stop there! Check in with Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities, especially those that include large populations of immigrants. The Sanctuary Movement has included representatives from nearly every faith tradition.

Research which immigrant populations are largest in your metro area, and what immigrant-led groups are actively working for their rights. Reach out to the groups in your area to find out what immediate campaigns they're engaged with and what kind of help they need from religious communities. It is especially important to find out whether these local groups are looking for faith communities to offer Sanctuary. If they are not, then your solidarity may take a different form.

**Remember to follow the leadership of the people most directly affected!** Immigrants often

organize and advocate for their own communities, so it's important that your congregation know and respect this groundwork and acknowledge that those most affected by injustice are the experts on their own needs.

Here is a list of national organizations with which the UUA, UUSC and UUCSJ have collaborated. You are encouraged to explore their work, and many of them will have local chapters in your city:

**Immigrant-Led**

- [Mijente](#)
- [#Not1More Deportation](#)
- Cosecha
- United We Dream
- National Day Labor Organizing Network
- Fair Immigration Reform Movement

**Muslim Solidarity**

- [MPower Change](#)
- Muslims for Social Justice
- CAIR
- Shoulder to Shoulder

**Faith-Based**

- The New Sanctuary Movement
- Interfaith Immigration Coalition
- [PICO Network](#)
- We Say Enough

**Racial Justice**

- Black Lives Matter
- Showing Up for Racial Justice

## Form an Immigration Justice Leadership Team

Community is the ground in which we're all rooted, and our work for justice needs to be grounded there, too. Begin by pulling together a faithful core team dedicated to exploring how your church might answer the call for immigration justice in the era of Trump. This team should be willing to meet frequently, perhaps every two weeks at least in the beginning. If you are able to include at least one member from your congregation's governing structure, this will help keep communication channels clear and open.

Your team will have a variety of responsibilities, and will lead the discernment process. Besides educating themselves on the issues, logistics, and legalities, they will need to determine how to respond to opposition to the idea of sanctuary, and how to address anti-immigrant feelings or other challenging statements by those inside and outside the congregation. Each congregation and each denomination has their own methodology around decision making processes, but it is always important to offer the necessary education and information within the congregation before you move to a decision.

**COVENANT:** Many teams begin with a covenant for how they will work together, particularly because as a group member you'll be exploring challenging issues. Consider basic things on which you can agree, such as listening respectfully, or making time for all perspectives to be heard.

**GROUNDING PRACTICES:** Establish practices that will keep you grounded in our faith and values, and will sustain you when things get difficult. Practices might include opening and closing your meetings with meditative words or prayer; starting with a brief personal check-in; using song or poetry. Choose practices that remind you and your group team of the spiritual grounding for your justice commitments. You will find some readings and other resources in our Appendix

**SCHEDULE:** Create a plan and schedule for your team based on the structures and processes your congregation uses for social justice engagement and decision-making.

**LEADERSHIP:** If you have a minister, director of religious education, or social justice coordinator, engage them early and often. Invite them to meetings, keep them updated, and invite them to discuss their perspectives on the issues. You will need the leadership and confidence of these religious professionals to help you bring the information and discernment to the congregation as a whole.

**CONTINUAL EDUCATION:** As the Leadership Team, make a commitment to continue your own education about immigration justice issues. This will also help you present the books, films and other tools to the congregation.

**JOIN OR FORM A COALITION OF CONGREGATIONS:** Call a meeting with other congregations, and work together to create a common declaration of sanctuary. Think about launching your coalition through a public announcement such as a press conference. Even if you don't have a sanctuary case that comes forward, announcing your work as a Sanctuary Movement coalition is a powerful statement. (See Appendix)

## Use a racial justice lens

No matter how dearly we hold the principles of racial justice and multiculturalism, each of us has been shaped by the ways white privilege has been denied to us or handed on to us, based on our accidents of birth.

This reality inevitably impacts our engagement with the immigration justice movement, in which local and national initiatives are often led by immigrants themselves. For those of us who are

white, our ability to be self-aware and reflective will determine how gracefully and effectively we can partner with these communities. If your congregation has not yet had frank conversations about racial justice and white privilege, begin by building this lens into your work for immigration justice. You can do this through study circles, workshops, and involvement with your local chapter of racial justice advocacy groups such as Black Lives Matter or Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ).<sup>3</sup>

Remember that even as our congregations are mobilizing in support of migrants, many Black Americans, First Nations people, and other people of color remain deeply vulnerable to racist language and actions. As we explore the concept of offering literal physical Sanctuary, we also must stay alert to those within and outside our congregations, whose experience makes them wonder what sanctuary they might find from the ongoing violence of racism.

## Assess your capacity

Once you have connected with local partners, created a Leadership Team, and laid the initial groundwork outlined above, you are ready to lead your congregation into a discernment process about whether to become a sanctuary congregation. Under normal circumstances, it could weeks or even months to move through the steps outlined in this section, depending on how actively educated and involved your church has already been with immigration justice. In the current political environment, you may be able to move more quickly; just be sure to take enough time to get your leaders on board. Many important actions **other than** a declaration of Sanctuary can be taken during the course of the process (see page 11).

Before you begin the meetings and conversations for discernment with the whole congregation, review the capacity of your Leadership Team, your congregational volunteers, and your physical and financial resources. Stay connected with your coalition partners outside of the congregation (immigrant rights groups and other religious communities), and be sure you know both what they need, and what they can offer to this effort. Sanctuary is a form of accompaniment and involves many factors besides housing and feeding those being sheltered, including spending time together, arranging for visitors, assisting with childcare, and advocating for the attainment of legal status where possible.

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<sup>3</sup> Find a local SURJ chapter at <http://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/>

## Location

Review your congregation's location, as outlined under "Who Are We?" above. As a group, list out and discuss the elements within your own setting that mediate toward or away from the possibility of becoming a sanctuary congregation.

For instance, things that would end up in the "opportunities" column might be your physical location in an accessible part of town, existing relationships with immigrant rights groups, current and past congregational involvement on these issues, active members or friends of the church who are undocumented, and engagement on the part of your members in multicultural competence and racial justice.

Things that would end up in the "challenges" column might be the absence of these elements. In addition, you would list in this column such things as an episode of schism or division around political issues in your congregation's past; your knowledge of members who strongly object to offering sanctuary; and challenges such as a pending move, deep financial distress, or a leadership transition that will take a lot of your congregation's energy and attention.

## Cross-cultural awareness and competence

Unless your congregation includes a large number of immigrants, your decision to offer sanctuary will be a cross-cultural experience. By definition, your guest will be of foreign origin. In addition, they may be different from the majority of your congregation's members in culture, language, religion, customs, food preferences, and in a host of other ways.

Like all cross-cultural encounters, there will be challenges. In particular, those of us who are white are challenged to become ever more aware of the norms and consequences of racial privilege, and the cultural assumptions to which these often lead. Your Leadership Team might wish to study together some of the recent books, study guides, and videos designed to help Americans better understand the ways racism continues to function through our institutions, laws and culture. In turn, this will help you be more awake to and sensitive about the racial and cultural differences your group will encounter in coalition work and in the offer of sanctuary.

## Assess the logistics of offering sanctuary

Assess your logistics needs in the context of your congregation's physical, human, and financial resources. **Keep in mind that hosting someone in sanctuary could last for a year or more.** This inventory is not meant to be a judgment of your congregation's commitment to justice, but a clear and honest assessment of its strengths and challenges in considering becoming a sanctuary. Engaging in this inventory within your Leadership Team will help you anticipate and

find answers to the same issues congregation members will be thinking of once you invite them into the discernment process.

## Review your physical space

**DEDICATED SPACE:** What private space can be dedicated solely to the use of your guest or guests? Keep in mind that this must be for all times of day and night and all days of the week, including Sundays. Consider as well:

- Will beds fit easily into the space?
- Is there easy access to a nearby bathroom, including a shower?
- Is there closet or wardrobe?
- Is there regular access to a kitchen? If not, can you set up a fridge, microwave, stovetop or hot plate, food storage area, and a sink?
- Is there consistent access to the internet? This is **essential**, since it will be your guest's only way to communicate with family and friends.
- Can a TV and DVD player be set up in the space?

If any of the things named above are lacking, your group will want to research the feasibility and cost of making physical changes, such as putting in a shower. As part of this assessment, you might find out whether any parishioners are home contractors, or whether partners have members willing to contribute pro bono labor. Crowdsourcing or crowdfunding is a good way to share the costs of such capital improvements, in which many people make small donations to an online fundraising campaign.<sup>4</sup> This is also a good time to make sure there is adequate signage for emergency exits, and regarding rules and areas for smoking, that fire extinguishers are accessible and in working order, and first aid kits are up to date.

**IMPACT ON RENTALS:** What might be the impact of providing sanctuary on rentals or other groups using your facility? Be sure you have a complete understanding of all that goes on in your congregation's space, so that you can anticipate the impact on others. For example, if a childcare center rents space in your building, they may have strict rules or licensing regulations they must follow regarding having non-affiliated adults on the premises during childcare hours.

**IMPACT ON CONGREGATIONAL USE:** As you consider the room or rooms that would be dedicated to hosting a person in Sanctuary, review all of the other common ways your building is used. Make a list of events or uses that could be impacted (or could impact your guest) such as use of your primary sanctuary (for worship, choir practice, weddings, funerals, bar/bat mitzvahs)

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<sup>4</sup> UURISE can help set up a Faithify or other crowdfunding campaign for this.

and of your classrooms and other spaces, such as for evening classes or gatherings, or youth group meetings or retreats.

## III. Discernment: Are You Called to Offer Sanctuary?

The decision to offer sanctuary is a decision to publicly resist current immigration policies. It is a powerful and courageous step, especially in an anti-immigrant political climate. Therefore, you must find ways to engage your congregation in the discernment process.

If you have carefully done the groundwork and exploration, offered opportunities for education on immigration issues, and established connections with immigrant rights groups and other interested faith communities, you are ready to involve your congregation in discernment toward making a decision about offering sanctuary. Every congregation has its own process for making decisions; what follows are some suggested steps.

**1. Offer multiple ways to explore the issue and support the discernment process.** These should include:

- At least one worship service in which your minister's sermon presents the challenges and opportunities of Sanctuary with the context of our religious values and commitments;
- Information on your church website, in the newsletter, and in the order of service and in the lobby and office about the coming informational meetings and the discernment process;
- Continuing educational opportunities: film screenings, book discussion groups, covenant circles focused on related topics; and
- Guest speakers, at worship or in forums, if possible including clergy or lay leaders from other congregations that have declared sanctuary; people who have been in sanctuary; and members of your local immigration rights organization. Remember that some of these speakers might be available to you via video-chat.

**2. Set up a schedule for small group gatherings.** These can include educational forums, book study groups and adult education classes to discuss what it means for your congregation to join the Sanctuary Movement, and how you are called to respond to immigrants in your community. Choose a variety of times, days of the week, and locations in order to maximize participation.

- Open the gatherings with prayer, some moments of centering silence, and/or a reading that helps frame the meeting as one grounded in faith;
- Be sure that all participants have a chance to speak and ask questions;
- Be prepared to respond accurately and patiently to those who may be strongly opposed; and
- Have copies of your FAQ information sheet.

**3. Assess the feedback you have gained from the meetings.** Questions and issues that arose which have not already been addressed by your team should be investigated; you can reach out

to your local coalition for additional research, discussion, and discernment. Follow up with the individuals or all attendees via email with decisions and answers.

**4. If you are unsure of whether or not your congregation is prepared to join the Sanctuary Movement, hold a congregation-wide meeting without a vote.** This is a chance for the entire congregation to gather and to hear one another's hopes and concerns around Sanctuary, and an opportunity for any last concerns to be fully aired. It is best scheduled not long before your scheduled decision-making meeting. It may be helpful if you:

- Begin with a summary of what you heard at the small group meetings;
- Provide your most up-to-date frequently asked questions (FAQs), highlighting any new information;
- Provide updates on the political climate, especially if the immigrant community in your area has been directly impacted by new raids; and
- Offer updates from your local sanctuary coalition, sister congregations, or interfaith organization.

At the conclusion of this meeting, you may wish to take a straw poll in order to determine whether or not there is enough agreement to proceed with your decision-making process. If there is no clear agreement or some very strong opposition from your members, then your leadership team may decide to consider asking the congregation only to support sanctuary. You can always decide to revisit the question of providing physical sanctuary at a later date.

**5. When you move on through the decision-making process and your resolution to declare Sanctuary passes:**

- Notify your local sanctuary coalition and other partners, including the [National Sanctuary Movement effort](#)
- Consider holding a press conference to announce your support of sanctuary (see the Appendix for sample press releases);
- Organize your schedule and volunteer team for next steps.

## IV. Next Steps

An offer of physical sanctuary means a significant commitment not only of space, but of volunteer time and energy. Some of the things volunteers will be needed for are listed below. You may have already tackled these elements as part of your preparation becoming a sanctuary congregation. If not, it's time to begin: the more of this you can accomplish *before* you are presented with an individual's immediate need, the more prepared you will be as a sanctuary community.

You may want to designate specific members of your Leadership Team to act as coordinators for these various roles. It's useful to know who is doing which pieces, well before you have a guest in sanctuary.

### Logistics

**MEALS:** Each person is different, and your guest may want more company or less (it's important to ask!). But in addition to supplying food that can be easily prepared by your guest, you'll want volunteers who can prepare and drop off food, and others willing to stay and share a regular meal to provide company and solidarity. If members would like to spend time with your guest or guests, it is important that they call or otherwise make arrangements ahead of time (as we would do with anyone we are visiting in our own private lives) to be sure company is expected and welcomed. Remember that your guest in Sanctuary is a whole and complex person whose immigration story is not their entire life – they might want a chance to visit about a wide range of other topics! Be conscious that language differences may exist, and set up appropriate translation arrangements if necessary.

**MEDICAL:** Is there a physician, nurse practitioner or other medical professional in the congregation or within your partner organizations who is willing and able to make a "house call" if needed? Is there a local clinic grounded in the community and justice work that might be willing to send a nurse or doctor to the congregation if needed?

**PASTORAL/EMOTIONAL SUPPORT:** If your guest is active in a faith tradition, having regular contact with clergy from that tradition might be helpful, in which case volunteers may need to help arrange this. Regular contact with others staying in sanctuary and/or those who have successfully completed a sanctuary stay may also be very helpful. Those who are currently in sanctuary, and those who have successfully completed sanctuary support each other with phone or video calls. A robust internet connection will be necessary to facilitate this communication. If your sanctuary guest has family in the area, volunteers may be needed to help transport them to and from the church for visits.

**ACCESS FOR FAMILY MEMBERS:** People living in sanctuary often have family members who are citizens or legal residents; they do not need to live within your walls, but they will want to visit your guest often. If your church is not easily accessible by public transit, you will want to ask about the family's transportation needs and the capacity of your volunteers to help out.

**INSURANCE QUESTIONS:** Whether or not having a guest in Sanctuary could create risk for the congregation financially is nearly always a question that arises logically during the exploration and discernment process. Questions often revolve around particulars of insurance coverage.

If your congregation is concerned about insurance questions, you can first review a copy of your actual policy (not the summary), and consult with an attorney or insurance agent to find out if they see anything that could preclude or exclude coverage. If you choose to inform the insurance agent of your plans for Sanctuary, you may want to frame it in the context of the congregation's mission, e.g. "we are living out our faith by providing a safe space for someone in need. Is there anything we should change in our current coverage?"

If you're told that housing a guest would be excluded from your current coverage:

- Ask for specifics: what language specifically in the policy excludes someone living there from coverage.
- Would the current policy deny other guests of the church coverage?
- Is it because the person is there overnight?? Is it because they are "living there", or would the policy apply similarly to events like youth-group sleepovers? Try to get specific reason and where in the policy the language limits or excludes so you aren't falling prey to a chance to charge you more for no actual additional coverage.

Find out what kind of a rider would need to be added to add coverage, and what it would cost. You may also want to consider how many claims your congregation has had in the past 5 or 10 years to assess risk of a claim related to or during the time of sanctuary, then assess congregations comfort with risk.

**For more information on insurance questions, see the Appendix.**

## Advocacy and witness

There is a key role for volunteers to play with advocacy, depending on the specific circumstances and issues surrounding the individual. Physical accompaniment can be an essential protection as well as a way to bear witness to the need for systemic change in the immigration system.

**ACCOMPANIMENT AND PHYSICAL PRESENCE:** Under President Trump's administration, protocols for immigration raids and arrests will change. As of this writing, "sensitive locations" are still in effect, meaning ICE agents are not supposed to conduct enforcement action at or near a place of worship. However, it is not clear if the Trump administration will eventually change this policy (see more details in "Legal Questions"). Your team will need to determine whether overnight accompaniment is needed under some circumstances.

At a minimum, it will be important for the person in sanctuary to have ready phone access to a staff member or volunteer in case of emergency or an official showing up at the door. Depending on how sanctuary congregations will be treated under President Trump's administration, your congregation may want to form a "rapid response network" of people who would show up immediately in the case that ICE decides to change its policies and enter a house of worship. Members of the network would decide in advance whether to simply maintain a prayerful witness; film and record what unfolds; or risk arrest by surrounding the building or blocking enforcement vehicles. These decisions should be made in consultation with your guest and with the coalition of sanctuary support congregations in your area.

Your minister or other religious professional is likely to have a key role in the pastoral dimensions of accompaniment. This can range from informal conversations with your guest to assisting with cross-cultural communications. It may also involve navigating parishioners' reactions if encounters arise with immigration agents. Be sure your religious professionals are on board with you!

**ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC LIAISON:** The success of your sanctuary guest's case under current immigration policy rests not only on the skill of the lawyers and the merits of a specific situation, but on the ways the story is told and the degree to which it is kept in the public eye. Winning your case in the "court of public opinion" is often very helpful to winning with ICE. Most successful cases include an interfaith team that can be relied on to rally people to a variety of public actions as part of your support strategy.

You will need someone willing to coordinate and communicate about your sanctuary case. This person will be a liaison between the legal team and the coalition supporting sanctuary (within and beyond your congregation) and will help coordinate advocacy. Tactics for this work include press conferences, vigils, petitions, meetings with elected officials, phone and email campaigns.

# Expand Sanctuary

*“There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.”*

- Audre Lorde

*“Where there is so much to be done, there must be something for me to do.”*

- Dorothea Dix

There are many ways we are all currently called to act to resist injustice and increase solidarity in defiance of the threats made by President Trump’s administration to the rights and safety of undocumented people, immigrants and refugees, Muslims, Black Lives Matter activists, people of color, LGBTQ individuals, and people with disabilities, among others. Becoming a sanctuary congregation is one strategy of many needed in the current moment, but together we can also work to expand sanctuary for all.

Our work towards solidarity will be most effective and transformational if done with an intersectional approach. This centers the leadership, insights, and experiences of those most adversely affected by the current political climate, and the long history of systemic oppression that has led us to this moment. Engaging in sanctuary organizing and other forms of solidarity invites us to continually ground our efforts in a commitment to anti-oppression learning, practice, and partnership and to carefully discern what actions we have the capacity and commitment to fully undertake and sustain. Whether or not your congregation decides to become a Sanctuary, there are many other ways to mobilize and be engaged! Here are some approaches you may want to consider:

- Commit to renewing and expanding intersectional, anti-oppression education and practice within your congregation and beyond.
- Map your congregation to determine what assets and resources you can share (e.g. space, child care, material supports for grassroots movements of resistance, etc.) and map your community to identify other partnering groups with whom to form coalitions and organize joint actions of resistance and solidarity.
- Engage in advocacy to pass resolutions for Sanctuary states and municipalities and to support the preservation of local Sanctuary ordinances wherever threatened.
- Learn about the Sanctuary in the Streets movement and the establishment of Rapid Response Networks that can mobilize resistance to raids, hate crimes, and other acts of injustice.
- Identify skills that members of your congregation and community may need, such as training in civil disobedience, nonviolent resistance, how to be effective allies, bystander intervention, etc.

-- Confront and disrupt incidences of Islamophobia, xenophobia, racism, white supremacy, anti-Semitism, misogyny, homophobia and transphobia, bullying and [hate speech](#) as they occur in your broader community, including local schools, businesses, faith institutions, public places, and print and online media. A resource from UUSC with some helpful tips can be downloaded at: [http://www.uusc.org/sites/default/files/confront\\_hate\\_speech.pdf](http://www.uusc.org/sites/default/files/confront_hate_speech.pdf)

-- Devote yourself to spiritual practices that equip you to stay centered, courageous, resilient and sustained during these challenging and uncertain times. Invite others to join you in these practices.

# Share Your Story, Stay Connected

**Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp! Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me. I lift my lamp beside the golden door!** – Emma Lazarus (carved on the Statue of Liberty)

Some of the greatest resources we have in this work can be found by turning to one another. Your stories and reflections, whether they have to do with successes, challenges, or anything in between, may be of tremendous value and encouragement to others engaged in Sanctuary and Solidarity organizing. Whether you are new to these efforts or have been working on them for years, sharing your questions, suggestions, and unique perspectives can help us create a community of shared learning and collective strength.

Share stories via [National Sanctuary Movement Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). Contact [sanctuarymvt@gmail.com](mailto:sanctuarymvt@gmail.com) to get linked to the national effort.

## Appendix

### Frequently Asked Questions

Some of the information that follows has been covered above as well, but you and your Leadership Team may find this format useful, especially as a way of sharing information with your congregation. You may want to add questions and answers that are specific to your own location and the questions your members are asking.

#### **Is providing Sanctuary illegal? Can we be arrested or charged with harboring an alien, or some other immigration related crime?**

There are as many ways to interpret the law as there are the scriptures and works of great thinkers. There are many activities within the Sanctuary Movement that are not likely to incur criminal liability, such as declaring your congregation a safe space for undocumented people, advocating for just immigration policies, advocating to help stop a deportation, holding legal clinics, or including undocumented people in your ministries that offer services such as temporary shelter, food, clothing, rides, etc.

The activity that carries the most risk is the invitation to someone who has a deportation order to take safe refuge in a congregation. However, it is not clear if public sanctuary would indeed be

breaking the law, or could be successfully prosecuted for harboring, since it is most commonly provided along with a public declaration about the person in sanctuary showing no intent to conceal, hide or harbor. No congregations have been prosecuted for providing sanctuary in the past forty years.<sup>5</sup>

### **Could they take away our nonprofit status?**

Declaring sanctuary and providing shelter to someone in need is an act of faith and an act of justice. It is not a campaign or electioneering act. Churches are considered nonprofits, and nonprofits are prohibited from engaging in political campaign activity, which is generally determined by supporting or opposing a candidate for elected office. However, nonprofits are free to advocate for political issues and publicly criticize policies and elected officials. As such, declaring or providing sanctuary should not have any impact on nonprofit status.<sup>6</sup>

### **What stops ICE, Border Patrol or local law enforcement from coming in and arresting someone in sanctuary?**

Faith communities (churches, temples, mosques, etc.) are one of the enumerated “sensitive locations” identified by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as locations where immigration enforcement actions (interview, arrest, searches, and surveillance) should not occur. It is important to note that **this is DHS policy, and not law**. The longstanding policy was clarified in a DHS memo in 2011.<sup>7</sup> It is unknown if the DHS will change this policy in the future.

### **Could President Trump ignore or override the Sensitive Locations memo?**

Yes. Although it is possible, there is a long history of recognizing the sanctity of faith communities, and in the past when this has been challenged, faith communities have joined together to demand the continued respect of the sanctity, even when the groups agreed on little else.

### **What if our insurance says they will drop us? Or deny coverage of anything related to providing sanctuary?**

If insurance is a concern, get a copy of the actual insurance policy – not just a summary – and read through the policy with an eye for limitations and restrictions on housing, overnights, providing shelter, etc. It may be helpful to consult with an attorney to help decipher the language. Following that, you may contact the insurance company to discuss the policy and the fact the

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<sup>5</sup> Note that the UUA, UUSC, UURISE and UUCSJ do not construe this document as providing legal recommendations, and encourage all congregations considering sanctuary to secure their own legal advice.

<sup>6</sup> For more information on political engagement for nonprofits, see the UUA’s Real Rules: <http://www.uua.org/action/realrules>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/ero-outreach/pdf/10029.2-policy.pdf>

congregation is considering providing 24/7 shelter to someone in need. If the insurance company says that is an uncovered activity, make sure to have them point to the exact language that prohibits the activity so it is understood what would need to change in the policy, or what type of rider would be needed to cover the activity. In general, one would expect that the general liability section of a congregation's policy would be sufficient, but it is prudent to look at the full policy to ensure it does not preclude someone "living" on site.

In the end, each congregation will need to determine what level of risk they are willing to accept. Questions to consider include:

- If the insurance company says they will deny claims related to offering sanctuary but we are unable to see how they could, are we willing to risk it and fight them in court if there is a claim?
- How many claims have been submitted under any policy in the past 5 years? 10 years?
- Is our current insurance company trying to dictate or restrict the way that the congregation's faith manifests?

### **When and how does offering sanctuary start and end?**

Becoming a Sanctuary congregation in today's political environment means that you are making a powerful public statement about the importance of welcoming people regardless of their citizenship status. Hopefully, Sanctuary becomes part of the congregation's DNA and continued ministry alongside immigrants. Becoming a sanctuary congregation (provider or supporter) starts when the congregation makes the decision to do so. Physical sanctuary starts when an immigrant takes up protective residence in the building. Sanctuary ends when the government rules favorably on the immigration case, when the person in sanctuary decides they no longer need or want to be in sanctuary, or when the guest permanently leaves the physical sanctuary of the congregation for any other reason.

### **How long does Sanctuary last?**

There is no set time frame: it could be weeks, months or even over a year.

### **What if we can only offer Sanctuary for a couple of weeks/months, etc.?**

Unfortunately, there is no way to know how quickly a Sanctuary case will be resolved, and as such a congregation must be prepared for sanctuary to last as long as needed. If your congregation is only able to commit to a short period of time, you are better suited to be a Sanctuary support congregation until you are able to make a long-term commitment.

### **What happens if the person in sanctuary loses their case?**

One of the reasons so few people enter sanctuary is that there needs to be a consensus between the legal team, the advocates, and the person themselves that theirs is a winnable case.

Sanctuary is not offered to every person at risk of deportation – only to those who are believed to have a strong case. There is no guarantee that any case will have a positive outcome, but to date, many sanctuary cases have been successful, in part because of the process by which cases are chosen. If at some point it becomes apparent that there will not be a satisfactory determination on their case, or if the person in sanctuary decides that being in sanctuary is no longer a viable or worthwhile option, there will need to be a careful and intentional conversation to decide when and how to end the stay.

### **Why does a person need sanctuary?**

Generally, people enter sanctuary because they have received a final order of deportation but believe that they have a legitimate case that either has not been thoroughly presented or appropriately argued before an immigration judge, and/or their immigration attorney believes they may be eligible for prosecutorial discretion. Often there are extenuating circumstances that could or should have been raised in their defense of deportation that were not due to expedited rulings, lack of or inadequate counsel, etc.

### **How do we decide if we want a specific person to come into sanctuary?**

When your congregation is notified of a person in need of sanctuary your Immigrant Justice Leadership Team will need to respond quickly, and reach out to the requesting party (immigration attorney, community or grassroots group, etc.) to get as much information about the person seeking sanctuary and their immigration case as possible. That information is what the congregation will use to determine if they want to provide a safe refuge for this particular person.

### **What is there is someone who needs sanctuary, but we aren't ready? Or don't feel comfortable?**

Declaring yourself to be a sanctuary congregation does not obligate you to take anyone or everyone into sanctuary. It is still up to your congregation to decide at the time if you are ready, and if the person in need is someone they want to commit their time and resources to assist. There should always be ample conversation between the person in need of Sanctuary, the immigration lawyer and the congregation's leadership team.

### **What if the person has a criminal record?**

Each congregation must decide the parameters of the type of candidate they will consider for sanctuary. We **strongly** encourage congregations to make this determination on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the immigration lawyer handling the case. Its important to recognize some of the ways in which people are criminalized.

- Undocumented people who cross the border more than once are charged with a felony, which puts them in the broad category labeled “criminals” by the federal government

- If the arrest or conviction was part of the persecution the person was fleeing in their home country
- If the person has an old record (DUI, assault, etc.) from years ago that represents where they were at the time, but not where they are in now;
- Immigrants are more likely to have arrests and convictions for mutual issues (ex: racial profiling by law enforcement, dealing with racist neighbors/co-workers, etc.)

**What kind of case works well for Sanctuary?**

--Generally, we have looked for a case where someone can win a stay of removal, or a deferred action status, however, that will be much more difficult under the Trump administration.

--Perhaps there might be alternative legal avenues apart from prosecutorial discretion such as a U-Visa, T-Visa or a credible fear claim for asylum.

It's very important to consider the exit strategy, so that people don't become stuck in Sanctuary for years on end.

--It's important to recognize that public sanctuary will make it difficult to fly under the radar in the future, if they are unable to win the case, so its important to think about an exit strategy.

**What if we take someone into sanctuary and later decide it isn't working out?**

In the same vein that declaring sanctuary doesn't demand that a congregation accept every and any person requesting sanctuary, neither does accepting a person into sanctuary mean that under every circumstance they person must stay in sanctuary in your church even if it isn't working. The act of going into sanctuary is often in direct defiance of an order of deportation or an imminent order of deportation, so the person in sanctuary could become more vulnerable even after entering sanctuary. If were to be the case, it would be necessary to be working with the Sanctuary coalition, your interfaith partners, and the immigration lawyer to try to find a new sanctuary placement and develop a plan for the safest possible transfer of the person from one sanctuary location to another.

**What if the person wants to leave sanctuary?**

Sanctuary can be very isolating, and there is nothing about it that is easy. It requires a lot of courage, faith, and sacrifice for the person entering sanctuary, so at any point that they determine that they want to do something else, that decision should be honored. Is it always up to the person in sanctuary to determine if it is successful, necessary, and worth the sacrifice.

**PHYSICAL SPACE**

**How much space do we need?**

There isn't a minimum amount of square feet required, but there does need to be sufficient private space to allow for a bed and for their belongings (dresser or wardrobe, etc.). If there is not a specific room, you might consider walling off part of a larger area to create an appropriate room.

**Do we need to have a shower?**

Yes. Although one can “sponge bathe” in a sink for a short period of time, this is not realistic for a multi-month stay.

**What if we don't have a shower or private space?**

If you do not have private space or a shower your congregation will need to decide if there is space that could be set aside and created as a private shower, if a shower could be added to existing bathroom facilities, or a new bathroom or shower could be constructed. If there is not space to build a private area or shower, then your congregation would be better off becoming a Sanctuary Support Congregation.

**What if we have a childcare center at our church?**

You will need to research the licensing regulations and the lease to determine if offering sanctuary could put the center or your legal contract with the center in jeopardy. Generally, there will be ways to provide sanctuary that do not put the center's license at risk, but you need to understand the regulations in order to craft rules or modify the building structure accordingly. Often it is as simple as declaring that the person in sanctuary will not have access to the childcare center when children are present.

**What are our options for involvement if we don't have space to provide sanctuary?**

There are many types of involvement. Consider a strong partnership with a congregation that can provide the physical space – agreeing to split costs, volunteer shifts, organizational management, advocacy and witness, etc. Working to advocate for pro-immigrant legislation, policies and ordinances is very important, as well as working with cities, counties, and states to decrease their partnerships and cooperation with DHS, ICE, and Border Patrol, declaring themselves immigrant Welcoming, and/or Sanctuary jurisdictions.

**Does the person in Sanctuary need to be in the place of worship, or can they stay in the parsonage or other building owned by the congregation?**

There is not hard and fast rule, but the general consensus is that use of the parsonage or another building would only work if it is on the same parcel of land as the place of worship. If the parsonage is on a distinct piece of property, even if it is only a block or so away, then it will not fall within the intended protections of the “sensitive locations” memo. As the provision of Sanctuary occurs by utilizing the government's own policies, it is prudent to try to work within the clear reading of those policies.

## LOGISTICS OF SANCTUARY

### **Can the person in sanctuary leave to go shopping? To the doctor? To work?**

No. Once someone enters sanctuary, they must stay in sanctuary either until they receive a positive outcome on their immigration case, they decide they no longer need/want sanctuary, or an emergency requires them to forfeit the safety of sanctuary. It is important to remember that by entering sanctuary, they have chosen to defy orders of ICE to leave the US, so once they have defied those orders, they must remain in the protective space. It is often helpful to think of sanctuary as a form of “house arrest” or non-prison detention. It is recommended that your congregation a sympathetic physician, nurse practitioner or other medical provider, or a health clinic willing to do “house calls” as needed for non-emergency issues.

### **What if there is a medical need or a medical emergency?**

If there is a medical need, ideally you will reach out to a medical provider or community clinic to have that need addressed within the walls of the sanctuary building. If there is a medical emergency where the sanctuary guest’s life is in danger, then emergency treatment must be sought, unless the guest chooses to deny medical care. These are issues that should be discussed as a part of the decision to bring a specific person into sanctuary. Hospitals are also seen as “sensitive locations” by ICE and DHS.

### **What if they have to go to court?**

This will need to be determined on a case-by-case basis. The first step is to see if an attorney is able to represent them and they can avoid appearing in person. If that is not a possibility, then the guest in sanctuary will need to determine how they want to handle the situation, ideally with advice from their attorney. There is a wonderful example of creative problem solving from Portland, OR where they created a “Church on a bus” in order to transport someone in sanctuary to appear in front of a judge for another issue while remaining physically in a religious space. In part due to community support, the judge dealt with the case at hand and did not involve himself in the immigration case – only asking confirmation from the minister that the person would continue to have a place in sanctuary.

### **Will the person in sanctuary become part of our congregation?**

That is entirely up to the person in sanctuary, but based on our experience, it is highly unlikely. Sanctuary is a social justice commitment, not a recruiting opportunity. It is common for someone in sanctuary to join the weekly worship service, while they also want to maintain and express their own faith.

### **Who “pays” for the person in sanctuary?**

Expenses for food, clothing, laundry, medical, etc. in general will need to be covered by the host congregation, the Support congregations, and the Sanctuary Coalition. Fundraisers, crowdfunding, and grants for justice work can help defray costs and lessen the drain on the congregation's resources.

### **Can a small congregation provide sanctuary?**

Yes. The size of the congregation does not necessarily matter as long as there is sufficient space, and a sufficient volunteer team that will ideally be from support congregations, interfaith partners, and a sanctuary coalition.

### **How do we declare sanctuary?**

In most cases, the public declaration is an important component of sanctuary. One of the reasons for a public declaration of sanctuary is the light it shines on the specific case, which allows others to organize and mobilize around it. Bringing attention to the case builds a strong case in the "court of public opinion" which results in pressure on DHS and ICE, which often leads to successful closing of a case. Once a congregation has discerned and decided they will provide sanctuary, a public announcement is often appropriate. This decision should be made in conversation with the partner organizations, and Sanctuary coalition. If there is a possible case on horizon, you might wait to announce both the decision and the start of sanctuary at the same time. Public declarations often start with a petition through the [Groundswell Movement](#) Platform and a press conference or a vigil.

### **When or why would there be private sanctuary?**

Private sanctuary, or when a congregation's sanctuary status has not been publicly announced, is a tactic that is sometimes used for a time before the case becomes public, and is often used as a way to leverage negotiations with ICE with the pressure of a public case looming. In this type of case, the determination is made by the legal team and the impacted person, and often will depend on the current relationship with ICE attorneys. There have been a number of cases won with this tactic, but it is not employed on every case. There may also be a need for short term housing without the intention for a public case; each congregation can make the determination if they are willing to provide short term housing.

## **Legal Questions**

The most common questions in the discernment process have to do with the legal parameters of offering sanctuary. Answers about when, and if, sanctuary violates the law depend on interpretation of the statutes on the books. For example, there is a law against bringing in and harboring persons not authorized to be in the United States (INA Sec.274). Some courts have interpreted harboring to require **concealment** of a person. When we declare sanctuary for an

individual we are bringing them into the light of the community, not concealing them in secrecy (U.S. V Costello, 66 F.3d 1040, 7th Cir. 2012). Other courts have interpreted harboring to be simple sheltering (U.S. V Acosta de Evans, 531 F.2d 428 (9th Cir. 1976).

No congregation has been prosecuted for allowing undocumented people to find shelter and safety in their house of worship. Thus far President Trump's administration has not directly attacked the Sanctuary Movement, but DHS and ICE may well strengthen their opposition. The legal advice provided in the links below was created to help you understand the legal arguments that have been marshaled in support of sanctuary in the past. They will also help you be aware of where legal actions of resistance differ from ones that may be in violation of immigration law. These tools will be updated as we learn more about how the current administration responds to declarations of sanctuary and what legal tools are effectively deployed in response.

**Catholic Legal Immigration Network:** This resource includes some information on how laws, their enforcement, and consequences for breaking them vary state by state.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/oadtcpu0vntdn0u/Catholic%20Legal%20Immigration%20Network.pdf?dl=0>

**New Sanctuary Movement Legal Toolkit:** <http://lynnhopkinsgroup.com/Toolkit1.pdf>

**Sensitive Location Memo:** The policies provide that enforcement actions at or focused on sensitive locations such as schools, places of worship, and hospitals should generally be avoided, and that such actions may only take place when (a) prior approval is obtained from an appropriate supervisory official, or (b) there are exigent circumstances necessitating immediate action without supervisor approval. The policies are meant to ensure that ICE and CBP officers and agents exercise sound judgment when enforcing federal law at or focused on sensitive locations, to enhance the public understanding and trust, and to ensure that people seeking to participate in activities or utilize services provided at any sensitive location are free to do so, without fear or hesitation.

Although the Sensitive Locations memo remains in an effect under the Trump administration, it is possible that ICE and CBP will utilize the exceptions to the memo, and also possible that Trump may attempt to modify the guidelines. Congregations should remain vigilant and demand that ICE and CBP not encroach on our sacred spaces. See more information here:

<https://www.ice.gov/ero/enforcement/sensitive-loc>

See ICE Memo here: <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/ero-outreach/pdf/10029.2-policy.pdf>

## Advocacy Strategies

Advocacy strategies will change rapidly as the Trump administration begins to crack down on Sanctuary cities and possibly on individuals in sanctuary, and widens the dragnet for deportations. But however the political circumstances around us change, public advocacy will remain critical.

In partnership with legal service providers, immigrants' rights organizers, and the person in sanctuary, a strategy will be developed and a multitude of different people in government or enforcement will be identified as the focus of your efforts. These might include the local ICE field office, ICE headquarters, city council and the mayor. Depending on the stand your state has taken toward sanctuary, you may also want to lobby your state legislators or your members of Congress through a sustained campaign of phone calls, emails, letter writing, and visits.

Advocacy work also includes organizing a broad base of support for the individual in sanctuary, as well as finding key allies. Often local leaders like the city council or the county board of supervisors as well as local religious leaders can be approached to use their power and influence to get the individual's case closed. We are always working to get more letters of support, more petitions signed, phone calls dialed in and more congregations working with us. Having an effective media plan is extremely important in garnering the type of attention needed to sway decision makers to close the deportation case.

The type of case by case advocacy to win a stay of removal is likely to become much more difficult under the Trump Administration, but we will fight to keep Prosecutorial Discretion guidelines that weigh positive equities of each case and continue to allow our undocumented community members to defer their deportation order. What follows are samples of press releases, opinion pieces, and social media posts that you may find helpful as you craft an advocacy strategy tailored to your geography and the circumstances both of your guest, and of your congregation.

## Communications & Social Media

### SAMPLE PRESS ADVISORY 1

For Immediate Release - March 20, 2017

Media Contact

Contact Name

Contact Email

Contact Mobile number

**\*\*\*Media Advisory\*\*\***

**DATE, TIME, LOCATION**

**Congregations Open Doors for Immigrants to Stop  
Administration's Deportation Plan**

**Through the Sanctuary Movement, faith communities launch new campaign to stop family  
separation and provide safe refuge in midst of promised deportations**

**City-** The Sanctuary Movement, a network of faith communities in XXX, is holding a press conference to announce faith communities' resistance to President Trump's plan to deport millions of immigrants, which would separate families and devastate immigrant communities. Since the 1980's, the Sanctuary Movement has taken up the call to welcome the stranger by providing safe haven to immigrants and refugees in need. Since President Trump's election, hundreds of congregations nationwide have joined the movement. Now the Sanctuary Movement is calling on congregations across all faiths to open their doors and provide refuge for immigrants facing detention and deportation. Congregations also welcome anyone who has been victimized by discrimination or hate crimes into these sacred safe spaces to unite the community around love, respect, and dignity for all.

These faith communities are also supporting those willing to answer the call to provide sanctuary at schools, hospitals, college campuses, community centers, and family homes. At this press conference, faith leaders commit to work with partner immigrants' rights organizations to create sacred space of sanctuary wherever it is needed.

**What:** Press Conference of immigrant and faith leaders opposing deportations

**When:** Time/ Date

**Where:** Location of press conference

**Who:** co- sponsor list of organizations

**Speakers:** List of speakers

###

## **SAMPLE PRESS ADVISORY 2**

**December 25th, 2016**

For Immediate Release

Press Contact: Name of someone easy to reach and knowledgeable on the issue

### **On Christmas Day Faith Leaders Offer their Churches as Sanctuary to Those Hunted in Raids**

#### **We Open Our Doors to Today's Josephs and Marys Despite ICE's Plan to deport them**

Sanctuary Movement leaders who have offered their congregations as spaces of refuge for immigrants facing deportation are outraged by the news that Immigration Customs and Enforcement and the Department of Homeland Security plans to conduct raids targeting families who have fled violence and persecution in Central America.

Faith leaders from many traditions remind our decision makers that the story of Christmas is about a prophet and savior born in a stable and a refugee family that fled the political violence.

In defiance of a court order to stop detaining children, the Obama administration has increased the detention of families by 173% over the last several months according to the Migration Policy Institute. And now the administration has announced it will search for and deport asylum-seeking families to the danger they are seeking to escape.

In the spirit of Christmas, faith leaders are declaring they are ready to once again open their doors to provide refuge for immigrants facing deportation and unjust targeting from ICE.

"As pastors we know that each and every family is a holy family and the individuals and families who have fled violence don't just need our prayers, they need sanctuary," explains Rev. Alison Harrington of Southside Presbyterian Church in Tucson Arizona. "We open our doors to today's Josephs and Marys despite ICE's plans to deport them.

When we heard that the Obama administration is beginning plans to round up Central American families and deport them back to the violence they have been fleeing, we couldn't help but imagine what would it have been like if the President was pharaoh in Egypt at the time of Jesus' birth when he and his family had to run from the death squads of Herod. What if he had ordered the deportation of the Holy Family?"

###

## Opinion Pieces

Don't underestimate tried and true tools such as letters to the editor and opinion pieces. Especially when written by members of the clergy, they have a good chance of being published and offer an excellent way to humanize the struggle for immigration justice. Remember that opinion pieces in particular are more likely to be published when they speak to personal experience and stories. They offer a strong alternative narrative and the power of a moral voice when they are grounded in our faith commitments.

## Sample Op Eds

*The Story of Daniel in the Hill*

<http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/civil-rights/208125-the-story-of-daniel>

*Protecting One Dad from Broken Immigration System*

<http://www.azcentral.com/story/opinion/op-ed/2014/06/29/immigration-system-broken/11726553/>

## Twitter

Progressive organizations can spread their message by expanding social media outreach to the public. Whenever we generate or find a story in traditional media that elevates our perspective and work, we should amplify it further through social media.

### Hashtags

Hashtags allow you to enter a forum with everyone else using the same hashtag; this magnifies the impact of the tweet.

#SanctuaryNotDeportation #SanctuaryRising #Greateras1 #Heretostay #Sanctuary4All  
#Not1more

### Allies

Tweeting @ an organization or a lawmaker is helpful to pressure decision makers and to invite other organizations to retweet your comment.

@GroundswellMvmt @sanctuarymvmt @CWS\_global @bend\_thearc @afsc\_org  
@unitedwedream @UUA @justic\_ucc @GBCSUMC @ELCA @PCUSAImmigrant @NSMPhilly  
@MPower\_Change @PICOnetwork

### Targets

@POTUS @RealDonaldTrump @WhiteHouse @DHSgov @ICEgov

## Sample Tweets

A church is fighting NAME's deportation by offering #SanctuaryNotDeportation. Add your name in solidarity LINK TO PETITION #LetNAMEstay

Tell @DHSgov & @BarackObama to #WeStandWithRosa Add your name in solidarity → LINK TO PETITION #SanctuaryNotDeportation #Not1More

Churches offer #refuge for Central Americans facing U.S. deportation <http://reut.rs/1m9UTgo> via @Reuters #not1more

Defend [#JeanetteVizguerra](#) & ALL undocumented #immigrants: Mother in Denver Takes Refuge as Deportation Looms #HereToStay <https://nyti.ms/2jlfiN>

.@UPCTempe Church Grants #SanctuaryNotDeportation to Immigrant  
[http://blogs.phoenixnewtimes.com/valleyfever/2014/09/tempe\\_church\\_grants\\_sanctuary\\_to\\_immigrant\\_facing\\_deportation.php](http://blogs.phoenixnewtimes.com/valleyfever/2014/09/tempe_church_grants_sanctuary_to_immigrant_facing_deportation.php) #not1more

***[Note: the initial period "." is important when is in the beginning of the tweet with @]***

ICYMI: On Christmas day faith leaders around the US reiterate their offer of Sanctuary to those hunted in ICE raids. <http://buff.ly/1QWHu80>

## Facebook

Facebook is particularly effective when there is a photo to accompany your post. Be sure to keep the post itself very brief and interesting, linking to the story you want people to read.

A church is fighting NAME's deportation by offering #Sanctuary. Add your name in solidarity  
LINK TO PETITION

Tell Homeland Security Chief and President to let \_\_\_\_ Stay!  
Add your name in solidarity → LINK TO PETITION  
#Sanctuary #Not1More

Churches open their doors on Christmas to [#immigrants](#) seeking refuge [#not1more](#) deportation  
<http://thinkprogress.org/justice/2015/12/26/3735048/churches-open-doors-to-immigrants/>

## Resources and Education

Sanctuary Movement Resource Page at SanctuaryNotDeportation.org

<http://www.sanctuarynotdeportation.org/resources.html>

Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice in Portland

<http://imirj.org/faith-community-resources>

Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Expanding Sanctuary

<https://www.crln.org/sanctuary2017>

United Church of Christ Immigration Resources

[http://www.ucc.org/justice\\_immigration](http://www.ucc.org/justice_immigration)

American Friends Services Committee Reading List Coloradan's for Immigrants' Rights

<https://www.afsc.org/sites/afsc.civicactions.net/files/documents/Immigrant%20Justice%20Recommended%20Reading%20List.pdf>

Unitarian Universalist Association Immigration Toolkit

<http://www.uua.org/immigration/witness/toolkit>

United Methodist Church

<http://www.umc.org/topics/topic-immigration>

Union Reform Judaism

<http://urj.org/blog/2017/02/15/learn-about-providing-sanctuary-immigrants-facing-deportation>

MPower- Open Letter Muslim Spiritual Leaders to Join Sanctuary Movement

<https://mpowerchange.org/blog/post/open-letter-muslim-spiritual-leaders-pledge-to-join-the-sanctuary-movement>

Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

<http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/ImmigrationSM.pdf>

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

<http://disciples.org/resources/justice/immigration/>

Know Your Rights- United We DREAM

<http://unitedwedream.org/thank-deportation-defense-card-handly-phone/>

