

History of Sanctuary at Peace UCC

9/17/2019

Fall of 2016 Series of adult education forums on immigration, including a presentation by the Minnesota Conference Immigration Team

March 25, 2017 Peace hosted presentation from the Rev. Grant Stevenson, Faith Community organizer for Isaiah, regarding the sanctuary movement and particularly sanctuary congregations and supporting congregations in Minnesota. Well attended by Peace members and members of other communities of faith

April 2017 Sanctuary team meets and begins exploration of Peace declaring itself a Sanctuary Church

Spring 2017 Fund raising and awareness event: Syrian dinner prepared by Ibrahim whose home is Aleppo Syria

June 2017 Congregation authorized Sanctuary Team to lead explorations about becoming a Sanctuary Church

September 2017 Congregation approves vision statement and votes to become a Sanctuary Church

Fall 2017- 2018 Sanctuary Team divided into subgroups and undertook the following tasks:

Visiting public officials re: concerns related to immigrants in our community, including Police Chief, Public Defender, two County Commissioners and Duluth Human Rights Officer

Designing space, fund-raising, and remodeling area at Peace that could be used for sanctuary guest(s)

Visiting with leaders, social justice committees, and members of other communities of faith to enlist possible support as Sanctuary Supporting Communities and to raise general awareness; included First Lutheran, Gloria Dei, UUCD, Our Savior's Lutheran in Solon Springs, French River Lutheran, Pilgrim UCC, Vineyard, Friends, and others.

Events at Peace UCC included: fund-raising Fiesta; Stewardship campaign for sanctuary remodel; Christmas Cantata with emphasis on Jesus as migrant/refugee, Dec. 2017; post card campaign and presentations regarding "public charge", hosting public interfaith panel discussion on "Our Sacred Obligation," and periodic updates on migrant issues and sanctuary progress.

In consultation with Sanctuary Congregations in the Twin Cities and attorney working with them, developed policies and outline of process related to receiving (a) sanctuary guest(s). This includes process for reviewing a request, covenant between guest and congregation, volunteer screening and manual, outline of assistance from sanctuary supporting agencies, and policy for handling donations.

Spring 2019 Social Justice group at First Lutheran hosted a series of adult forums on immigration issues and issued an interfaith invitation for a public vigil and prayers. The original intention was to host a single event which took place June 23 with statements by faith leaders at the Plaza, a walk to the federal building and a prayer vigil there.

The group has continued to meet and has become the Interfaith Committee for Migrant Justice. The planning group is open, but generally is a core group of 10-12 individuals. The email list of interested parties consists of 110 contacts. Discussions are wide-ranging and include contact with legislators, the possibility of arranging for a border trip, community forums, an assessment and feasibility study related to legal needs related to immigration, inquiry into sponsoring asylum seekers who have no family connections in the States, support for the vigil at Sherburne County Jail (largest detention center in Minnesota) etc.

July 11, 2019 Peace hosted "Lights for Liberty" vigil with 200 attendees

August 2019 Request to Hub for Social Justice and Council to change team name to Migrant Justice Team.