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WISCONSIN FAITH VOICES FOR JUSTICE ANNOUNCES THE FORMATION OF THE DANE SANCTUARY COALITION

Good morning. I am Rabbi Bonnie Margulis, President of Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice. I am here today as a rabbi, a Jew, and a leader in the faith community, to stand in solidarity with our immigrant and refugee brothers and sisters and to announce the formation of the Dane Sanctuary Coalition.

The Dane Sanctuary Coalition has been created in response to immoral immigration policies that threaten families, instill fear in our communities, and violate the most basic ethical standards all our faith traditions teach – that we are all created in the image of God, endowed with inherent worth and dignity, and deserving of a life free of violence and deprivation. The national New Sanctuary Movement, of which Dane Sanctuary is a part, is dedicated to upholding our faith teachings and providing shelter and support for our friends and neighbors facing deportation.

To date, the congregations offering sanctuary include First Unitarian Society and Congregation Shaarei Shamayim; Madison Christian Community – Advent Lutheran Church and Community of Hope United Church of Christ; and Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ. Supporting congregations include First Congregational United Church of Christ; Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, First Baptist Church, and James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation. Many more congregations are in the process of deciding what their place in the Coalition will be.

In the Bible, we are commanded to love the stranger in our midst. But these are not strangers among us. They are our friends, our neighbors, our co-workers. They sit beside us in class. They own businesses in our neighborhoods. They are part of the fabric of our community and we are richer for their presence among us.

As people of faith, we strive to bring to reality our vision of a world where every person is treated with dignity and respect, where their contributions to our society are valued, and where all can live together in freedom and safety. This vision impels us to stand together in unity with our immigrant and refugee friends and neighbors, to offer our support and help, and to provide Sanctuary to those in need. Can we do this? Si se puede – yes, we can!