

# Sanctuary Not Deportation: A Faithful Witness to Building Welcoming Communities

You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord,  
“My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.”

- Psalm 91:1-2

*As the faith community, we are called to accompany our community members,  
congregants and neighbors facing deportation.*

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## **Sanctuary Movements and the Immigrants' Rights Movement**

People of faith from all traditions called on Congress to pass immigration reform, yet Congress failed to move forward on meaningful legislation. Meanwhile, the deportation machinery became more advanced under the Obama Administration, with an alarming rate of more than 1,100 people being deported every day, totaling nearly 2.5 million deportations under its administration. Trump has promised to expand on deportations in his first hundred days of office. Under the Obama administration, the organizing efforts of undocumented youth in 2012 pushed the administration to create the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which has allowed close to a million DREAMers to travel and work legally.

In [2014 a resurgence of the Sanctuary Movement](#) began out of need in the community to stop deportations at a case-by-case level. In May of 2014 [Daniel Neyoy Ruiz](#) took Sanctuary in Southside Presbyterian Church in Tucson, Arizona, the same church that helped nearly fifteen thousand political refugees escape the tragic civil wars in Central America during the [1980s](#). Daniel won a stay of removal after 27 days of living in Sanctuary. The story spread through the media at a time when President Obama was delaying Executive Actions on immigration and more immigrants facing deportation invited congregations in their region to offer refuge and join the fight to keep their families together. Over the next year, more than a dozen people came forward to take refuge in Sanctuary and the majority were able to win a stay of removal or an order of supervision. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) delayed justice on many occasions. Rosa Robles-Loreto found victory after 461 days of living in Sanctuary. Some left churches with a written promise from ICE that they would not be deported. All continue to fight their case to gain permanent relief from deportation.

This resurgence of the Sanctuary Movement has created a platform to raise up the moral witness of people of faith, while at the same time lifting up the prophetic stories of immigrant leaders who are brave enough to speak out against the injustice of deportation. Our Movement contributed to significantly increased public pressure on the Obama Administration to announce the President's Executive Action on Immigration on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014 (Deferred Action for Parents of Americans or DAPA). We are hoping to do the same under the Trump administration.

We have heard that Trump plans to begin by deporting those with criminal charges. However, when these individuals have families that rely on them, and are an integral part of our community it is our duty to stand against their deportation and separation. Many families are fleeing intense violence and persecution and if they're deported they could very likely meet death upon their return. Many have faced immigration court to present their case without legal representation or through mass trials termed "rocket-dockets" in a mockery of our justice system. The Administration believes targeting them for deportation will prevent others from coming, but we know from experience, such as in the 1980s, that no harsh policy can deter people fleeing for their very lives.

As people of faith, we have a moral responsibility to act. Along with partner organizations, people of faith have been advocating to stop individual deportations in our communities. Sanctuary escalates and amplifies these efforts by responding to our neighbors who face deportation orders with safe refuge and sanctuary in our congregations.

### **What is Sanctuary?**

#### ***An Ancient Tradition of Faith Communities***

Sanctuary is one of the most ancient traditions that we have as a people of faith. The ancient Hebrew people allowed temples and even whole cities to declare themselves places of refuge for persons accused of a crime, a practice that allowed those wrongfully accused or facing unjust punishment to escape swift and harsh retribution until the matter could be resolved. In the late Roman Empire fugitives could find refuge in the precincts of Christian churches. Later during the medieval period, churches in England were recognized sanctuaries, offering safe haven for a temporary period to accused wrong doers. In the United States the first practical provision of anything like sanctuary occurred in the years before the Civil War. The Underground Railroad came into being to help slaves flee the South and find safety in many congregations throughout the country. In the early 1970's faith communities opened their doors to conscientious objectors who'd been drafted to the Vietnam war.

### ***The Sanctuary Movement in the 1980s***

When refugees from the Civil Wars in Central America began to flee to the United States in the late 1970's, the U.S. government did not recognize them as political refugees seeking asylum. Many were deported and received by death squads, and murdered upon their return. From this dire injustice, the Sanctuary Movement was born. It peaked with over 500 congregations establishing an underground railroad whereby asylum seekers moved through the United States to safe houses and safe congregations in Canada. Sixteen clergy and lay leaders in the Tucson area were indicted. Eight of them were convicted but served no time for their involvement in assisting Central American refugees. The Sanctuary Movement sought to remind the United States government of our core values and hold up the truth, that the US was directly supporting with arms, money and training the dictatorships and death squads of Central America. The Sanctuary Movement won the inclusion of Central Americans in our asylum laws as part of the 1986 immigration reform law. It is because of courageous truth tellers from Central America and the Sanctuary Movement who followed them that Central Americans today can claim asylum.

[The Public Sanctuary Movement: An Historical Basis of Hope](#) by Eileen Purcell

## ***Our Sacred Duty:***

### ***Sacred Texts and Tradition***

#### ***Judeo-Christian Sources***

- God calls people of faith to remember that they once were strangers in a strange land and they must, must welcome the stranger as an expression of covenant faithfulness (Leviticus 19:33-34)
- We must "learn to do good, seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow" (Isaiah 1:17)

#### ***Christian Sources***

- We are called to love our neighbor as ourselves (Luke 10:27)
- Parable of the Good Samaritan, a foreigner from a different sect saves the victim on the roadside (Luke 10:25-37)
- Book of Ruth, the story of a foreign woman heroine who fulfilling God's purpose. We remember the famous words of Naomi to Ruth on the road from Moab to the land of Judah, "Where you go I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God" (Ruth 1:16)
- Mary, Joseph, and Jesus fleeing to Egypt to escape the persecution of Herod (Matthew 2: 13-15)

#### ***Islamic Sources***

- One should immigrate to escape harm (4:97)
- The men who stayed in their own city (Medina) and embraced Islam before them loved those who have sought refuge with them. They do not covet what they are given but rather prefer [their brothers and sisters] above themselves although they are in need. Those who preserve themselves from their own greed shall surely prosper. (59:9)
- Muhammad immigrating to Medina to escape persecution from his people in Mecca. We welcomed among

them, and became a leader in their community.

### ***Church Leaders on Immigration:***

"Immigrant Children must be welcomed and protected." - Pope Francis

"We must view [immigrants] as persons, seeing their faces and listening to their stories, trying to respond as best we can to their situation." - Pope Francis

"The Episcopal Church remains committed to finding a legislative resolution and to working with all partners willing to meaningfully reform our immigration laws so that they protect families, offer access to citizenship, and respect the dignity of all human beings." -Deborah Stein and Katie Conway.

(to see the full document on immigration reform that the Episcopal church proposes see the link

[http://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/eppn\\_fact\\_sheet\\_cir.pdf](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/eppn_fact_sheet_cir.pdf))

"Today we ask our representatives to choose the biblical path of assisting the aliens among us, rather than oppressing them," - Rev. Paul Stumme-Diers.

### ***Current Day Sanctuary Movement***

Drawing on this tradition, communities of faith have once again seen the need to declare Sanctuary for immigrants as the rise of deportations continues to separate families. In the 1980's we were compelled by the call to welcome the stranger, as we opened our doors to newly arriving refugees. Now we are moved by the call to love our neighbors as ourselves, as those who are entering into Sanctuary are most often long term members of our communities - our neighbors.

In 2007, an initiative known as the New Sanctuary Movement took shape with coalitions of congregations in major cities throughout the country. As workplace and neighborhood raids escalated, these congregations opened their doors to provide refuge to those facing deportation. See NSM toolkit here (<http://sanctuarynotdeportation.org/> just scroll down to see the updated toolkit)

In 2014, we stopped thousands of deportations through case-by-case advocacy. Those entering sanctuary are eligible for Prosecutorial Discretion, but local ICE field offices have been very reluctant to offer this relief from deportations in which the community has had to engage in public advocacy to win stays of removal or an order of supervision and in most cases. Trump has promised to expand and deport even more people specifically targeting Latinos.

### ***Our Sanctuary Movement-Milwaukee***

The New Sanctuary Movement in Milwaukee began in 2007 as part of Voces de La Frontera. Over the course of the last 10 years the New Sanctuary Movement has expanded its operation in Milwaukee to provide more services than just physical sanctuary. Currently NSM-MKE offers help finding and contacting family members who are detained, offering court accompaniments locally and to Chicago, facilitating interfaith prayer services, organizing know your rights trainings and leadership courses, and working across religion, ethnicity, and socioeconomic backgrounds through hosting events such as pilgrimages, posadas, all while collaborating with various faith groups. To contact the Milwaukee chapter of New Sanctuary Movement, please contact Nayeli Rondin-Valle at Voces de La Frontera at 414-643-1620.

### ***Executive Actions on Immigration***

We do not know what executive actions will take place under the Trump administration. We are aware of his promises to reverse all Executive actions that Obama has made regarding deportation relief.

## Central American Humanitarian Crisis

In the summer of 2014, an increase of children and families fleeing gang violence in Central America's Northern Triangle began presenting themselves at the U.S.- Mexico border seeking asylum. Some of these children and families have lost their asylum cases because they were unable to find legal counsel or due to "rocket docket" that are meant to expedite trials but in reality deny due process. These children and families should have the opportunity to appeal their case with adequate representation.

In 2015, 235,413 people were deported, a decrease from the 2012 all-time high of 409, 849. However, the Trump administration is working on changing that. This is why Sanctuary is particularly important to lift up the stories of the families and provide safe refuge from deportation.

## Sanctuary Goals and Strategy

*Immediate Local Goal:* As the faith community, we are called to accompany our community members, congregants and neighbors facing deportation. By offering sanctuary, we can fight individual cases, advocate to stop deportations, and win deferred action on a case-by-case level to keep families together.

*The National Goal:* 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.

*Ecumenical goal:* Bring awareness in the wider faith community of our call to care for migrants and families. To support members of our faith community, and provide support for members of other faith communities as we struggle for similar goals.

By joining the Sanctuary Movement, congregations and people of faith can:

Influence the administration to stop their plan to target and deport Central American families seeking asylum and to stop family detention all together.

Contribute to the advocacy strategy with Immigration Customs Enforcement and Department of Homeland Security officials to improve the implementation of prosecutorial discretion guidelines and thereby reduce deportations.

Highlight the stories of those in Sanctuary to push back against unjust enforcement policies such as the [Priority Enforcement Program](#) or [287g](#).

Continue to pressure elected officials to create a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million immigrants who are in the United States and provide a viable immigration system for new arrivals.

## Talking Points/ Messaging

### General Talking Points:

As the faith community, we are doing what Congress has refused to do: protect immigrants from an immigration system that is separating families and deporting people who are woven into the fabric of their communities and congregations.

We are witnessing the rebirth of the sanctuary movement in the United States. We are seeing a widespread and growing commitment by faith communities to provide sanctuary to moms and dads and others in need of protection.

Our congregations open their doors to provide sanctuary. We stand in solidarity with immigrant leaders fighting to keep all families together, regardless of immigration status.

The Trump administration should not be targeting Central Americans families for deportation, but should instead utilize their resources towards providing legal representation to those who have been unable to attain assistance as they seek asylum and expand our help to refugee families

We are seeing gaps in the implementation process of prosecutorial discretion guidelines and ask Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Department of Homeland Security to exercise and live up to their mandate and stop deporting our undocumented community members who contribute so much to our congregations, communities and country.

Detention and deportation have become money-making businesses that feed the prison industrial complex and line the pockets of private corporations with billions of dollars.

*Talking Points for Specific Sanctuary Cases:*

As people of faith, we are called to welcome the sojourner and love our neighbor. In the case of INSERT NAME, he/she has been part of our community for a long time. He/she is not a stranger but our neighbor and we are accompanying them as they stand up for their right to stay united with their family.

INSERT NAMES want to make sure their family stays together and that INSERT NAME does not become one of the hundreds of people unnecessarily deported each day.

One of our key belief statements as the DENOMINATION is: INSERT STATEMENT. As in the tradition of the prophets and apostles, God calls the church to speak truth to power, liberate the oppressed, care for the poor and comfort the afflicted. We are responsible to a higher calling, a higher law, that takes precedent over our flawed and outdated immigration laws.

The church has been a space of sanctuary for those wrongly persecuted for thousands of years. The ability to provide humanitarian sanctuary defines who we are and our call as people of faith to care for the most vulnerable among us.

We witnessed the power of the Sanctuary Movement in the 1980s. The church was able to protect Central Americans from being deported and returned to death squads in the Civil Wars they faced at home, which the United States refused to recognize. Thousands upon thousands of lives were spared because of the Sanctuary Movement.

Now in the midst of our broken immigration system, faith communities once again must demonstrate leadership and action to keep families together, to keep parents with their children, to protect our brothers and sisters like INSERT NAME, to demand the Obama Administration stop the deportations of Central American families seeking asylum.

As people of faith, we are called to be a community that forgives one another, if someone has had a past criminal offense and has dealt with their debt to society and moved forward, they should not be separated from their family and their community in which they're an integral part.

## **Who are those seeking Sanctuary?**

Most Sanctuary cases begin when a lawyer or legal service clinic identifies someone who has been working to stop their deportation order without success. The legal service team assesses whether someone may be eligible for prosecutorial discretion. Those who enter into Sanctuary should have a reasonable potential of receiving a stay of removal, order of supervision or some other form of administrative relief. The legal service team then consults with Sanctuary organizers and involved pastor to begin a conversation about a potential Sanctuary case. Ideally this happens months in advance, but sometimes the individual comes to a legal clinic or local organizers in the 11th hour, requiring a congregation to act quickly. Each case is different, sometimes often there is a family linked that would be separated, but not always.

## **Private vs. Public Sanctuary**

Many who enter sanctuary do so as the last resort. They have exhausted their legal avenues to stop their deportation order and they need refuge. Many have chosen the tactic of first going into Sanctuary quietly without advising the media, however, they must always be transparent with ICE and have the legal team notify ICE that there is someone going into Sanctuary with all the details included as part of submitting the stay of removal application. This is a negotiation tactic with ICE leveraging the power of public Sanctuary before it happens. If ICE does not respond, then it is often the case after 1-2 weeks that someone would launch a public case through hosting a press conference. Private sanctuary is very focused on winning the individual case. Public Sanctuary is about creating public pressure to win the case, and impacting the national narrative lifting up the stories of brave immigrant leaders about why our government should stop unjust deportation policies.

## **How do we “Declare Sanctuary?”**

The public aspect of the Declaration of Sanctuary is critical. It is by bringing attention to the case, mobilizing the community, and advocating for the individual that we are able to successfully get cases closed. We encourage every community of faith to enter into a time of prayer and discernment so that when cases arise, they are ready to act. Once a congregation has made the decision to declare Sanctuary for an individual, it is publicly announced at a press conference and prayer vigil, at which time the individual and their family enters into the premises of the house of worship. The individual in need of Sanctuary remains at the house of worship until they are granted a stay of deportation. Of course, an individual may decide at any time to leave Sanctuary for any reason and should have the full support of the community to do so. Living within Sanctuary is not an easy thing; the financial cost of not working, the media attention, the strain on a family can all be burdensome.

## **Advocacy**

One of the most important aspects to Sanctuary is the advocacy that we do on behalf of an individual. In partnership with legal service providers and immigrants' rights organizers a strategy is developed and a multitude of different people are identified as the focus of our efforts, like Department of Homeland Security Secretary and President Trump. They and other members of the administration are the focus of phone calls and letter writing. There is also a great deal of work organizing a broad base of support for the individual as well as finding key allies. Often the City Council and the Board of Supervisors, as well as local religious leaders, are 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.

Sample Petitions:

<http://action.groundswell-mvmt.org/petitions/tell-the-obama-administration-save-rosa-from-being-deported>  
<http://action.groundswell-mvmt.org/petitions/tell-the-obama-administration-stop-luis-from-being-deported-keep-your-promise>

Sample Letter of Support from Good Shepherd United Church of Christ

[www.uccfiles.com/pdf/8-24-14-GoodShepherdUCC-Sanctuary-letter-University-Presbyterian.pdf](http://www.uccfiles.com/pdf/8-24-14-GoodShepherdUCC-Sanctuary-letter-University-Presbyterian.pdf)

Work to get Denominational Support: United Church of Christ News on Denver Sanctuary Coalition

[www.ucc.org/news/colorado-ucc-joins-sanctuary-coalition-09102014.html](http://www.ucc.org/news/colorado-ucc-joins-sanctuary-coalition-09102014.html)

[www.pcusa.org/news/2014/9/17/letter-president-support-sanctuary-and-hope/](http://www.pcusa.org/news/2014/9/17/letter-president-support-sanctuary-and-hope/)

## **Leadership of those in Sanctuary**

This is perhaps the most important aspect of Sanctuary; we are not the leaders of this movement, those in Sanctuary are. It has been the courage and the faith of those who have come out of the shadows to say, "we are undocumented and we are unafraid" that has inspired our work. Those taking Sanctuary are putting everything on the line and are often risking a great deal for the benefit of the larger movement; their leadership, their voice, their opinions and wisdom should be prioritized at all times. They should be involved in every aspect of the campaign as they choose to be. Sanctuary is hard work and requires great sacrifice - if at any time a family wishes to leave Sanctuary, their wishes should be respected and celebrated. We should always remember that Sanctuary is not something that we do for our undocumented brothers and sisters, it is something we do *with* them.

## **Deportation Defense**

As we prepare for increased raids targeting Central American families, it is important that allies accompany impacted immigrant communities in knowing their rights and preparing a protection network to try stop people from being apprehended. It will also be important for people who are deported to document their experiences. This can help inform the public about the realities faced by individuals who are deported and build opposition against raids and deportation.

[AFSC- Know Your Rights- Conozca Sus Derechos](#)

[United We DREAM Know Your Rights](#)

[Guide to sharing your story of rights abuses, raids and deportation](#)

## **What are the logistics of Sanctuary?**

### ***Living Arrangements***

Ideally, the family will have space on the grounds of the house of worship that will not be used for any other purpose for the duration of their time in Sanctuary. They should be encouraged to arrange the room in whatever way they would like and to make it as much like home as they can. Easy access to showers, bathrooms, and a kitchen should be considered in designating a space for the family (sometimes showers will need to be configured in some way for those locations without permanent showers). Because the entire purpose of declaring Sanctuary is to keep a family together, the entire family is invited to stay at the house of worship. While the individual living in Sanctuary does not leave the premises, the family comes and goes as they choose. At times the family can become overwhelmed by visitors and media. They should be encouraged to establish whatever boundaries they need. It is



the practice of immigration officials and law enforcement agencies to respect the sanctity of houses of worship by not coming on their property for the purpose of apprehending an individual who has an order of deportation.

### ***Legal Questions***

Everyone always wants to know - are we breaking the law? Law is a lot like scripture - its up to your interpretation. There is a law against bringing in and harboring persons not authorized to be in the U.S. ( Sec.274) While we are clearly bringing not bringing people across the border, whether we are harboring someone is up for interpretation. 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 the dark of secrecy. (insert footnote. U.S. V Costello, 66 F.3d 1040 (7th Cir. 2012)) Other courts have interpreted harboring to be simple sheltering. (insert footnote. U.S. V Acosta de Evans, 531 F.2d 428 (9th Cir. 1976))

Those who are entering sanctuary will most likely have an opportunity to win relief from deportation, this means that they are not a high priority for deportation and that ICE can and should grant them prosecutorial discretion. In essence, the Sanctuary Movement is holding the administration accountable to their own standards and guidelines as put forth by the President's Executive Actions.

### **[New guidelines for Prosecutorial Discretion](#)**

#### **[ICE Sensitive Locations](#)**

The space of sanctuary is sacred. Immigration officials know that if they went into a house of worship to arrest a pastor they would have a public relations nightmare on their hands. To date no one has ever been arrested for offering Sanctuary.

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

### ***Insurance Questions***

The General Liability Insurance that all churches carry should cover any mishaps that could occur while someone is living in Sanctuary. We have never had any incidents wherein a congregation had to make an insurance claim; however, if you would like to talk with your insurance company first please do as part of your research and preparation.

### ***Community Support***

Families living in Sanctuary are often in need of support in a multitude of different ways. Most importantly, they need the support of our friendship - so plan game nights, hang out with them, do what you can to make them feel at home and a part of your congregational family. It is also important that they are able to retain some normalcy as a family - this can often be done by helping set them up to cook for themselves. You may find that congregation members will want to show their love and support by bringing food, which may be helpful a few nights a week, but it is important that the family is able to care for themselves and control as much as possible in a situation that is very much out of their control. Instead of bringing meals, encourage people to bring food that they can cook with.

There may also be the need for financial support, particularly if the individual in Sanctuary normally works. People should be encouraged to give to the family, either directly or through the house of worship (these donations to benefit an individual are not tax deductible). Care should be taken to respect the pride of the family in these situations. It is difficult for all of us to be in a situation where we have to depend on others. We have often reminded individuals that by being in Sanctuary, they are engaged in hard work, both for their families but also for the movement and that work should be compensated.

### ***Training other Congregations***

Instead of only one or two congregations taking on the work of Sanctuary, it is important that other congregations also show support. Coalition congregations join together in advocacy efforts, joint sign-on letters, logistical support, vigils and cooking. Having other congregations engaged creates training opportunities for leadership from other congregations to become accustomed to the work of Sanctuary, an experience they can bring back to their congregation as they prepare themselves for a future opportunity of offering Sanctuary.

## **Communications**

It is important that we use common messaging so that we can influence and push forward a national narrative on Sanctuary and the urgency for the Administration to stop deportations.

### ***Sample Press Advisory***

September 9, 2014

Contact: XXXX

Phone

Email

## **Metro Denver Sanctuary Coalition Formation**

### ***Five congregations join immigrant community members in declaring Sanctuary***

Rev. Mike Morran invites all faith communities to join the coalition saying “Because each of our traditions value love, justice, and dignity, we extend this invitation to all Metro Denver faith communities to join in forming a broad multi-ethnic and interfaith coalition assuring sanctuary for immigrant members of our communities. Please contact us if you are interested in becoming a host or support congregation.”

“As President Obama and congress continue to delay addressing the very immigration policies’ that damage our communities, we feel particularly called to publicly declare our commitment. We dare to do what they have not yet done, to stand with our immigrant brothers and sisters, to declare their human dignity and recognize the sacredness of their contributions as members of our communities” added Rev. Anne Dunlap of Chadash Community, United Church of Christ.

**WHEN:** WEDNESDAY, September 10, 3:00PM

**WHERE:** First Unitarian Society of Denver, 1400 Lafayette St., Denver, CO 80218

**WHAT:** Press conference declaring the formation of the Metro Denver Sanctuary Coalition  
Statements from Rev. Anne Dunlap, Chadash Community and Rev. Mike Morran, First  
Unitarian Society of Denver  
Street theater from immigrant families in deportation  
Members of five congregations joined together in song

**WHO:** American Friends Service Committee, Chadash Community United Church of Christ, First Unitarian Society of Denver, Mountain View Friends Meeting, Boulder Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, and the Immigration Justice Task Force of the First Universalist Church of Denver

**DIRECTIONS:** Weather permitting we will gather on the Southeast corner of Lafayette and 14<sup>th</sup> Ave. If it rains we will move inside the church.

###

## ***Sample Press Release***

**December 25th, 2015**

### **For Immediate Release**

Press Contact: xxxx

### **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 that could have killed Jesus as a baby.

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?"

**Rev. Adan Mairena of West Kensington Ministry, Philadelphia, PA** added, "Our elected officials cannot say 'God bless America' and at the same time deport, exclude, dehumanize, and criminalize those who come seeking refuge, in this case God's children from Central America. They are those whom Jesus called 'the least of these.' If we continue to go down this road of moral decay the consequences will be grave.

As a Christian I stand on the side of divine law and cannot remain silent as our elected leaders give into the darkness that works to divide God's family as opposed to uniting it. I, and others like me, will continue to put our faith into action no matter what."

**Rev. Chris Jimmerson** from First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin where they recently offered sanctuary to Sulma Franco contributing his reflection, "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.' (Hebrews 13: 2). The Christian Bible, indeed the sacred texts of most all of the world's religions are filled with admonitions such as this to treat strangers among us with love and hospitality. Yet, ICE continues to detain entire families, including children, who have fled persecution, trauma and threats against their very lives, re-traumatizing them and threatening to deport them to the very places where their lives will again be threatened. Our immigration courts continue to deny asylum to folks who clearly do have a well-founded fear of persecution and if returned to their country of origin could face fatal consequences.

As a Unitarian Universalist minister, I stand on the side of love, called by the world's great faith and wisdom traditions to decry ICE's new plans to detain and deport even more Central American families. Our faith calls upon us to do just the opposite – to offer refuge and support, compassion and hospitality to to these women, men and children. This is our only morally justifiable action."

###

### ***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

[www.azcentral.com/story/opinion/op-ed/2014/06/29/immigration-system-broken/11726553/](http://www.azcentral.com/story/opinion/op-ed/2014/06/29/immigration-system-broken/11726553/)

### ***Social Media***

If all the organizations involved expand our social media work, our outreach to the public is larger. When we are able to garner traditional media, we must make sure to push it out through social media. Hash tags allow you to enter a forum of everyone else using the same hashtag, this amplifies the impact of the twitter post. Examples include #not1more #allin4relief #allinfor11million #keepyourpromise #letrosastay #timeisnow.

Tweeting @ an organization or a law maker is helpful to pressure decision makers and to invite other organizations to retweet your comment. Allies include @GroundswellMvmt @CWS\_IRP @bend\_thearc. Decision makers include @BarackObama @WhiteHouse @DHSgov.

### ***Sample Tweets***

- A church is fighting NAME's deportation by offering #Sanctuary. Add your name in solidarity LINK TO PETITION
- Tell @DHSgov & @BarackObama to #WeStandWithRosa Add your name in solidarity → LINK TO PETITION #Sanctuary #Not1More
- Churches offer #refuge for Central Americans facing U.S. deportation <http://reut.rs/1m9UTgo> via @Reuters #not1more
- .@UPCTempe Church Grants #Sanctuary to Immigrant Facing Deportation [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

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

(the initial period "." is important when is in the beginning of the tweet)

### ***Sample FaceBook Posts***

- A church is fighting NAME's deportation by offering #Sanctuary. Add your name in solidarity LINK TO PETITION
- Tell Homeland Security Chief Jeh Johnson and President Barack Obama 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/>

Toolkit adapted from <http://sanctuarynotdeportation.org/> section "Sancturay Toolkit New"