



4 WAYS YOUR FAITH COMMUNITY CAN PREPARE FOR SANCTUARY

By Rev. Alison Harrington

We call upon our congregations and communities to go beyond talk of loving our neighbor to revolutionary love, living our faith and values by opening our doors and hitting the streets to create sanctuary alongside marginalized communities to stop the violence and seek justice in all that we do. Here's how we can prepare while the newly elected administration moves in.

1. SIGN THE PLEDGE TO RESIST DEPORTATION AND DISCRIMINATION.

Making this public commitment sends a strong message of resistance to the administration that our faith communities will not stand by while our friends, families, and neighbors continue to live in fear as targets of hate crimes, incarceration, and deportation.

Making a public commitment to resist sends a strong message to the administration.

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Our pledge also sets an example of powerful, values-rooted resistance for people of faith and moral conscience who are struggling to discern the right thing to do in this moment. And most importantly, it is a promise to marginalized communities that we will work alongside those in the struggle to ensure the dignity and human rights of all people.

When you add your name, make sure to mark whether your faith community is interested in playing a role in the Sanctuary Movement so we'll be able to connect with you to hear what your community needs, and equip you with strategies, stories, trainings, and opportunities to take action.

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2. CONNECT WITH LOCAL SANCTUARY COMMUNITIES, IMMIGRANT RIGHTS GROUPS AND COALITIONS.

We're in a new era of organizing because of the elected administration's extreme racist, discriminatory, and anti-immigrant policy proposals — but these are deep-set issues our communities have been fighting against for a long time.

#2 - Connect w/ local Sanctuary communities, imm. rights groups and coalitions.

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Connecting with groups that have experience working within immigrant and marginalized communities, and are led by people in the struggle, is a necessary first step to creating powerful and sustainable local coalitions that can plug into the national movement.

Here's a list of pro-immigrant faith groups, or you can do a Google search for local immigrant rights groups in your city or state.

3. PROVIDE SPACE IN YOUR HOMES, HOUSES OF WORSHIP, AND COMMUNITY CENTERS FOR HEALING, EDUCATING, AND ORGANIZING.

Depending on what the needs are of our local communities, and what happens after Inauguration Day, Sanctuary may be needed in a variety of contexts.

But immediately, we can create safe spaces anywhere for people to heal, learn, and organize:

-Offer up the literal spaces of our churches and community centers for gatherings, forums, office space, and organizing work. A lot of crucial organizing work happens on a shoestring budget. Any resources we have to support that work can mean the difference between success or failure. One of the easiest and yet most powerful things we can do in this moment is provide childcare for community meetings — childcare is costly and yet vital for the participation of parents at meetings.

Just remember: Opening our spaces to community groups to meet and strategize does not mean we are invited into that space. Unlock the doors, turn on the heat, and move out of the way. There is, of course, times in which we may be invited, but we must wait for those invitations and have upfront conversations with folks about expectations.

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[CLICK TO TWEET](#)

-White allies can create sanctuary space within your communities for white people to engage in talking about White Supremacy. Over half of white Americans voted for the President-elect, including a surprising number of white women and college-educated white men. We will need to consider smart outreach and ministry strategies to dismantle deep-rooted racism and xenophobia within our own circles and communities.

-Create and respect the sanctuary spaces of marginalized and underrepresented people. All of those directly impacted by systems of violence and oppression must have their own space to heal and find wholeness within circles of love and support where their life and experience is centered and shared.

4. SET UP A RAPID RESPONSE TEAM FOR IMMIGRATION RAIDS THROUGH SANCTUARY IN THE STREETS OR THE PROTECTION NETWORK.

Sanctuary doesn't just have to be a specific space or region, it is also a way of being. Communities banding together and looking out for one another can be a powerful way to provide each other with sanctuary.

Pro-immigrant communities and organizations have been setting up loose networks to watch out for each other for as long as they've existed. More recently, people have been using and setting up these networks to watch out for and respond to immigration agents ripping people apart from their communities.

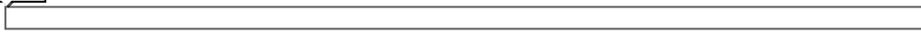
A lot of what we need already exists in the love and connection we have for one another.

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Immigrant communities almost always have informal mutual aid networks among themselves. Intentionally listening for them, and finding ways to support them when invited to, is one of the best first ways to become a part of a local rapid response network.

Formalizing these networks in times of duress is part of how the Protection Network in Arizona was born from extreme anti-immigrant hostility, aspiring to provide legal support, trainings, a common defense fund, and a rapid response system.

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More recently, the New Sanctuary Movement in Philadelphia has built what they're calling "Sanctuary in the Streets" which is a formal network of over one thousand people ready to respond in a moment's notice whenever a raid is reported into their emergency hotline.

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Creating sanctuary everywhere isn't easy, but it becomes easier when we remember a lot of what we need already exists in the love and connection we have for one another. The more we can build on that, the better we'll all be.

Additional Resources:

[Links to full "Sanctuary in the Era of Trump" webinar](#)

[Sanctuary Movement Toolkit](#)

[New Sanctuary Movement Legal Toolkit](#)

[What All Immigrants Should Know Post-Election 2016](#)

[Know Your Rights](#)

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