

**Dane Sanctuary Coalition
Membership Report
March 13, 2022**

I. Christ Presbyterian Church

CPC's Refuge (a social justice group) has continued to make immigration a focus of our work. As part of this work, we have:

- Started writing short "Immigration Spotlights" for the weekly all-church email highlighting an immigration-related issue and providing links to more information about that issue, along with prayer requests and possible actions. We have written these about monthly in collaboration with the Community Immigration Law Center (CILC). Topics have included the Afghan Adjustment Act, changes in enforcement of immigration laws, and information on recent CILC legal victories, among others.
- Hosted an hour-long zoom seminar on the impacts of climate change on human migration. (This was very successful, and the speaker is available to give this talk to other congregations if there is interest. Email Angie at afdickens08@gmail.com if you're interested.)
- Hosted two Letters to the Border events virtually, with speakers addressing immigration policy under the Biden Administration and the role of Open Doors for Refugees. People then wrote letters to people in detention.
- Helped support CILC and Open Doors for Refugees. With Open Doors, we publicized their work and shared their requests for volunteers and resources with the congregation. With CILC: CPC hosts the law center and provides additional support.

II. First Baptist Church

During 2021 First Baptist Church formed a Refugee and Immigrant Ministry Task Force under the auspices of its Board of Outreach. The task force's focus in 2021 was on partnering with Bethany United Methodist Church to help four households in an extended family of Afghan refugees as they resettle in the Madison community. This ministry complemented support provided by Jewish Social Services as the resettlement agency for the family. It is anticipated that the volunteer time and financial support provided to the Afghan family will continue to be a focus for 2022. During 2021 Pastor Tim Schaefer provided web development assistance to DSC, and Rabbi Bonnie was the worship leader of one of our on-line and in-person worship services, preaching on social justice and the work of Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice and the Dane Sanctuary Coalition. Finally, the task force has been informing the congregation about advocacy opportunities that Rabbi Bonnie has announced in support of refugees and immigrants.

In working with the Afghan families, we have seen how very difficult resettlement is for them. We have learned of other Afghan families that are isolated and that have needs that aren't being met for various reasons, including language and cultural barriers. Helping them become self-sufficient is a multi-faceted effort requiring an on-going

relationship that seeks to balance mentoring and support of their needs with letting them take responsibility for their own lives and the consequences of their actions. It is a rewarding but challenging experience that begins with directly connecting with the Afghan families in the first place, something that is a real programmatic need for congregations wanting to help.

III. James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation

In 2021, Voces de la Frontera has focused on two campaigns:

(1) Advocating for including a pathway to citizenship in the budget and then in the Build Back Better bill. (2) Litigation and advocacy about voting rights and redistricting. The Madison chapter of Voces has been mostly involved with the first campaign. Reebers collected signatures on postcards for the effort in September. There were large statewide demonstrations on May first and in October. The October event was declared a “Day without Latinxs,” and some groups of essential workers did not report to work those days, choosing instead to attend the rally. Some employers who have expressed support for a path to citizenship for the undocumented gave workers permission to take that day away from work. Some Reebers participated in the October Day Without Latinxs, and of course, the Building Unity Bus was there. On November 5, members of the Madison chapter shut down the street in front of Tammy Baldwin’s downtown office to help persuade her to support a pathway to citizenship. Pete Haney participated in that action, and we weren’t arrested. This past week, a delegation of activists from Voces participated in national demonstrations in Washington, D.C. Director Christine Neumann-Ortiz and several others were arrested. In November, the House passed a version of the Build Back Better reconciliation budget bill that included temporary work authorization for an estimated 7.1 million immigrants. This falls far short of the goal of a pathway to citizenship for 11 million undocumented workers. The Senate may vote on companion bill this coming week. The local Voces chapter will hold a press conference outside five Democratic Party offices in Wisconsin on Monday, December 13th at 3:30 Central Time. The Madison press conference is at 15 N. Pinckney, not far from the Capitol.

There’s a lot of work to do on immigration-related issues. The Biden Administration has made a few minor, halting efforts at policy changes but has essentially continued most of the practices that horrified us under Donald Trump. Recently, the administration expanded the “Remain in Mexico” policy to include countries not previously covered, expanding a practice that has already cost migrant lives. It’s important that we not lose our horror in the face of this and that we think about ways out of this hole.

IV. Madison Christian Community Sanctuary Team 2021

Here are brief descriptions of activities from 2021 and plans for 2022 from the Madison Christian Community (MCC) Sanctuary Team:

- Our Team meets regularly to ensure our readiness to welcome sacred siblings into sanctuary whenever we might receive the call. This means having our space

in order (and the downstairs bathroom remodel was part of that), our protocols ready, and, most importantly, volunteers recruited and trained. So ... we commit ourselves to faithful preparedness.

- Various letter-writing efforts (including a Palm Sunday parade/protest to advocate for humane immigration policies)
- **Just One International educational event.** Just One is a Madison-based organization that works with youth in Honduras to support their education and their ability to stay in country, if they choose. Our own Emily Kuhn spent a year in Honduras teaching 7th and 8th graders through Just One. She led this inspiring Zoom event and included leaders to participate from Honduras.
- **Separated.** We participated in the DSC “Big Read” event by hosting a book discussion on “Separated: Inside an American Tragedy” by Jacob Soboroff which takes a close look at the tragic policy of family separation. We held two Zoom sessions.
- At the end of 2021 we began our engagement with the **Dignity Project**, a ministry to support asylum-seekers in Juarez, Mexico. We were introduced to the Project by MCC members who have been heavily involved with the project through their prior church community in New Mexico. We are going to work on ways to support the Project financially as well as doing some hands-on contributions (e.g. blankets).
- **Big View.** In the spring of 2022 we will participate in the Big View with viewing sessions at church and discussion sessions on Zoom.

V. Midvale Community Lutheran Church

Midvale Community Lutheran Church, led by the Immigration Action Team, sponsored a month of learning and sharing during June, Immigrant Heritage Month. Midvale cohosted, with the Dane Sanctuary Coalition a virtual educational update on changes in immigration policy presented by Erin Barbato (UW-Immigrant Justice Clinic) and Aissa Olivarez (Community Immigration Law Center). During June, we conducted a fundraiser to benefit these two legal clinics, raising a total of \$6,464 which was split equally between the organizations. We ended the month with an Immigration worship service.

The rest of 2021 was focused on developing a plan for Midvale to sponsor and welcome an asylum seeker or small family for a two year period, presenting the plan to Midvale members and Congregational Council, and gaining approval. As of February 2022, the plan is completely approved and funded, and we have invited the two legal clinics to find guests who can benefit from our sponsorship. Please pray for our successful care and support for our immigrant siblings.

If your congregation would like to look at our proposal and consider a similar welcome by your congregation, [CLICK HERE](#).

VI. Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ Immigration Justice Mission Team

The year 2021 was a full and engaging year for the immigration Justice Team of Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ and the same level of activity continues into 2022.

A highlight of 2021 was the collection and delivery of 33 large Uhaul boxes of clothing to Casa Alitas immigrant welcome center in Tucson, Arizona. Casa Alitas provides a warm welcome, healthy food, shelter, assistance in locating family members, and help in making travel arrangements to sponsors for migrants seeking asylum-in the United States. This was our second clothing collection drive for Casa Alitas, the first being in 2019. This second drive reinforced the ORUCC connection with the wonderful volunteer staff at this welcoming site near the border. The Mennonite Madison Church, with whom we share space, actively participated in this effort.

In August -September 2021, we were grateful to be able to provide a compassion offering of \$3,941 to the Community Immigration Law Center (CILC). CILC is a Madison-based nonprofit organization that provides legal representation to immigrants facing deportation, free legal clinics and training and education on immigration issues.

September and October 2021 were very active months with several activities sponsored by the Dane Sanctuary Coalition: a postcard signing event to our legislators as a statement of support of immigration reform measures, a webinar with Aissa Olivarez of the Community Immigration Legal Clinic, and Immigration Justice under the Tent, a masked, in-person vigil hosted at ORUCC of pastors and congregation members of the Dane Sanctuary Coalition in support of immigrant rights and justice.

October and November 2021 were particularly memorable for our chair, Ruthanne Landsness, for it was during this time that she was welcomed as a volunteer at the Casa Alitas welcome center in Tucson. At Casa Alitas, Ruthanne interviewed individuals and families who were dropped off by ICE or Border Patrol at Casa Alitas, helped provide clothing for guests, and made arrangements for transportation of guests to their sponsors. Ruthanne will return to Casa Alitas in mid-March 2022 for another month of volunteer time at Casa Alitas.

In mid-November 2021, our focus turned to assistance to Afghan Refugees who had arrived at Fort McCoy. In coordination with other congregations and individuals around the Madison area, we collected fabric and notions for transport to Fort McCoy, where the fabric was transformed at the sewing center at Fort McCoy into beautiful, culturally appropriate clothing for the Afghan people being housed at Fort McCoy. On March 20

of this year, we will be celebrating “Gift Card Sunday” as a way of collecting gift cards and bus passes for Afghan refugees that have been settled in Dane County.

We anticipate another full year of activities as we do our best to learn and grow through our work for compassion and justice.

VII. Plymouth UCC, Madison

Our mission to help our immigrant neighbors included financial support for DACA filing fees, Afghan refugee support to Catholic Charities and Jewish Social Services, and support (in-kind rental support and obtaining two grants for products) for the Atwood Personal Essentials Pantry whose clientele includes immigrant neighbors. We provided a welcome and snacks for the “Mass March for Drivers Licenses and Citizenship” marchers (sponsored by Voces) as they arrived in Madison from Milwaukee. We are also organizational members of Voces de la Frontera and Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice.

VIII. Temple Beth El

In late February, 2021, the Immigrant Rights Action Team co-sponsored a presentation by Erin Barbato, the Director of the U.W. Immigration Law Clinic with the DSC entitled: Immigration and Refugee Policy under Biden: Implications for Action. Inspired by this presentation, we asked Temple Beth El members to join us in developing our vision for next steps in advocating for immigrant rights. Much of our focus at that follow up meeting in March was on how to integrate our students’ education about the Jewish immigrant experience with the plight of current immigrant and refugee communities. In May we meet with middle school students to explain the broader mission of our Social Action Comm. and to suggest possible B’Nai Mitzvah projects involving immigration issues. In May we also supported and publicized Dane Sanctuary Coalition’s “Big Read” with the book, *The Death and Life of Aida Hernandez*, and facilitated two discussions with congregants.

Over the next several months, we shifted our focus to civic engagement and voting rights but continued to inform and educate Temple members about local organizations, advocacy campaigns, and opportunities to get involved by connecting them with relevant organizations. In late Oct., several members of our team participated in a vigil organized by DSC to support a pathway to citizenship for our immigrant neighbors and to gain information on advocacy actions such as contacting legislators and writing letters to the editor.

In Nov. of 2021 we engaged Temple members in several direct service projects to deepen our understanding and provide assistance to our immigrant neighbors by partnering with JSS and Open Doors for Refugees to help set up apartments and participate in drives to gather winter clothing donations for newly arriving immigrants. In Nov. our committee also broadened its focus and changed our name to the Immigrant and Refugee Rights Action Team.

In Dec., we hosted two discussions of the second DSC Big Read -*Separated: Inside an American Tragedy*. We also publicized opportunities to assist JSS and Open Doors

with the local resettlement of Afghans residing at Ft. McCoy. In addition, our committee met with Janice Beers, Immigration Services Coordinator at the CMC and attorney Carmel Capati to better understand their program of humanitarian parole sponsorship and to begin to explore whether we might provide sponsorships as individuals or as a congregation.

In January, we co-hosted with DSC a presentation by Erica Rosales and Erin Barbato on the new Center for DREAMers which provides and coordinates services for undocumented and DACA recipients throughout the state to ensure equitable access and support for higher education. This talk was followed by another brainstorming session to identify future educational and action steps.

We are currently preparing to facilitate two discussion groups on Mar. 22 and Apr. 3 of the DSC Big View event, the Netflix series, Living Undocumented. We are also continuing to inform our listserv community about advocacy actions, volunteer opportunities, and educational events related to immigrants and refugees, including an advocacy postcard project supporting Ukrainian refugees.

DANE SANCTUARY COALITION REPORT as of 12-13-21:

- In light of the increased needs of asylum seekers and potentially, Afghan refugees at Fort McCoy, the DSC Steering Committee has responded to requests from our immigrant-led partner agencies to help find affordable housing and raise funds for legal services for asylum seekers in Madison.
- We continued to network with several national interfaith or faith-based immigrant rights organizations as well as Centro Hispano, Voces de la Frontera, the Community Immigration Law Center (CILC), the UW Immigration Clinic, the Dane County Immigration Services office, Jewish Social Services and the Catholic Multicultural Center's Immigration Law Project.
- We sent out requests to our 21 congregations for volunteers who could give temporary housing to fully vaccinated asylum seekers, allowing them to be released from ICE detention in Dodgeville and local jails. Asylum-seekers from Nicaragua and Kenya were housed by some congregation members.
- We created an Advocacy and Communications Team to promote immigrant rights issues, send out press releases and announcements and write op-eds for local newspapers on immigration and refugee rights.
- We have a new website - <https://danesanctuarycoalition.org/>
- We started a monthly e-newsletter and added many more volunteers to our contact lists.
- We began looking into housing models our congregations could use to find affordable housing for asylum seekers and pro bono immigration law clinic models and possible funding sources for the Community Immigration Law Center (CILC).
- We sponsored a Zoom presentation by immigration lawyers at the Catholic Multicultural Center on what it means to become a sponsor for Afghan refugees

who are still trying to come to the U.S. through "humanitarian parole" and have families in the Madison area. We sent out written information sheets on sponsorship to all our congregations.

- We continued to provide volunteer drivers to immigrants needing rides to ICE check-ins in Milwaukee and offices in northern Illinois, adapting our protocols for Covid safety during the pandemic.
- We cosponsored several marches and rallies by Voces de la Frontera to demand a legal path to citizenship for undocumented essential immigrant workers.
- Several of our congregations organized outdoor postcard-signing events in the late summer and early fall to Cong. Mark Pocan and Sens. Tammy Baldwin and Ron Johnson to push for a path to citizenship in the reconciliation bill and the Build Back Better bill.
- We organized a "Big Read" of the book *Separated: Inside an American Tragedy* by Jacob Soboroff and held several online discussion groups about the book.
- We are sponsoring a "Big View" of the documentary "Living Undocumented" on Netflix and to help congregations organize Zoom discussion groups after people view the film.

Dane Sanctuary Coalition Volunteer Driver Program Report 3-10-22 Dan Zimmerman and Dorit Bergen

Drive requests continue to come in and so far we've been able to meet them all, except for once or twice when the request came in the day before. Dan then suggested attempting to get the appointment rescheduled, which was done, and we got that person there the following week. Dan and Dorit are in the process of updating our driver instructions to reflect the new Waukegan office and covid protocols. We have also connected with George Vernon, who works with immigrants outside of Dane County. We have agreed to convoys, so that he finds rides for people to and from Madison and we take them to and from Milwaukee, etc. It's working so far. Finally, we have made one local drive so far.