



UU FAITHACTION NEW JERSEY
Congregational Challenge/Sanctuary Challenge
April 2018

One year ago, UU FaithAction agreed to challenge our New Jersey congregations to make a significant commitment to support communities of immigrants. We would be Sanctuary Congregations perhaps; we would support other faith communities in Sanctuary work; we would reach out to find ways to demonstrate our religious call to be fair to every person, to welcome every person in our congregations and in our communities.

The Immigration Task Force prepared an Immigration Action List. We asked each congregation to review the list and, if possible, act on at least three specific activities in support of immigrants. We said we would recognize publicly those congregations that were able to make such a commitment.

We are pleased to announce that – so far – there are eight congregations that have met this challenge. We recognize the strong commitments of the following congregations.

Beacon Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Summit. Beacon has made a commitment to offer Sanctuary. The Immigrant Justice Committee and Congregation of Summit Beacon, has embraced the work of *Standing in Solidarity with Immigrant Communities* and voted to become a Sanctuary Congregation. They have prepared the building and made all legal efforts necessary to accomplish that. Beacon has also worked in support of local Immigrant Rights Groups, including the NJ Alliance for Immigrant Justice, Make the Road NJ, and First Friends and formed a *Know Your Rights* training team that is assisting other local organizations (St. Teresa and YMCA) in offering this training to undocumented individuals, their employers or families. Trained and supported individual members of the congregation who visit detained immigrants. *Let's Drive NJ* campaign were supported by educating and collecting signatures from congregational members. Postcards and petitions have been signed and sent to the governor and NJ legislators.

Morristown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. This congregation has actively supported refugee support with a family from Syria and one from Afghanistan through the Refugee Assistance Morris Partners (RAMP). It has been a long-time supporter of Wind of the Spirit, a well-known advocacy group of immigrants, both financially and with joint advocacy. It is working with First Friends; it has supported a Fair and Welcoming Resolution in Morris County, and taken other measures to support fair immigration policies.

The Unitarian Society, a Unitarian Universalist Congregation at East Brunswick. The East Brunswick congregation has made a strong commitment to actively support nearby Sanctuary congregations, including the Reformed Church of Highland Park, including sentry duty. In addition, they are active with

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Interfaith RISE, support a rapid response program called DIRE, successfully advocated a county government Fair and Welcoming Resolution, and supported organizing of migrant farm workers.

The Unitarian Society of Ridgewood. Ridgewood was a founding member of the Northern New Jersey Sanctuary Coalition (in 2002), and currently a USR member is president. That coalition supports housing for those who need it. The congregation also strongly supports the work of First Friends, both financially and with volunteers regularly visiting migrants held in detention. As a member of NJAIJ, the congregation attends and supports Know Your Rights workshops and holds many events to support Dreamers, migrant workers, and others. It is very active in public policy around immigration.

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Monmouth County. The UUCMC is collaborating with CASA Freehold. Its Sanctuary Working Group serves as a Rapid Response Team with which CASA and members have been present during ICE raids throughout the county. UUCMC has supported First Friend's efforts to improve conditions at the Elizabeth Detention Center. The Social Justice Committee has supported Syrian refugees. The congregation has declared itself a Sanctuary Support Congregation and is planning to support sanctuary congregations in Monmouth county.

Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Montclair. Montclair is a co-sponsor with full support for the physical sanctuary work pledged by the local B'Nai Keshet synagogue. They expect to recruit more volunteers in all kinds of support work. The congregation has also been active in education and advocacy on immigration policies.

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Princeton. Princeton has also had full congregational commitment to become a Sanctuary Congregation, once its large renovation work is complete. Plans are underway to be able to offer Sanctuary in the summer or fall. In addition, Princeton has supported KIND (Kids in Need of Defense) to provide pro bono legal assistance to youthful migrants, financially and actively supported First Friends, held Know Your Rights workshops, and built up relationships with both LALDEF (Latin American Legal Defense and Education Fund) and NSA (the Neighborhood Sanctuary Alliance in Princeton). The congregation has held workshops on policy issues and continues active support in public policy matters.

Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing. UUCWC has sponsored the Mercer County Fair and Welcoming coalition, supported First Friends and KIND, and pledged support for the Princeton congregation's sanctuary commitment.

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