

Greetings Rapid Responders and Everyone in the For Such a Time as This Network,

**Thanks to all who participated on the Rapid Response call on Wednesday.** Since the possibility of the need for short-term refuge in our congregations is one of interest to all, I will go ahead and share the notes with all currently on our list serve. I offer these with the understanding that these may be shared within the relevant committees in our congregations. If you know of people who want to participate directly in our phone or in-person meetings and want to be on the list-serve, please let me know or Ann Erickson at [aerickson@thechurchcouncil.org](mailto:aerickson@thechurchcouncil.org).

I also want to thank staff from the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project ([Jessie@nwirp.org](mailto:Jessie@nwirp.org)) and Columbia Legal Services (Joe Morrison) for being on the call and helping to explain some of the situations that might be faced under the new (and possibly forthcoming) executive orders and the resources that can assist with such areas as Knowing Your Rights and creating safety plans for families. Most important is the website: [www.nwirp.org](http://www.nwirp.org) which has ready-made materials for immigrant families and those who wish to accompany them or offer solidarity.

The beginning point for our conversation was the preparation for workplace raids or raids in other settings. These could be large-scale, such as has occurred in meat-packing plants, apartment complex raids, or more random raids. In any of these cases, the results can be devastating for families and traumatic for both people who are picked up and their loved ones. We did learn through the executive action that, while clear categories of people were priorities for arrest under President Obama, now people suspected of having been involved of criminal activity could be at risk of arrest and detention. Given that ICE officials or Border Patrol may not distinguish at the moment of a raid among certain categories of status, all need to be prepared for various scenarios.

### Overview

Many of us remember the Swift plant raids in 2006. Many hundreds of people were detained. In the confusion and chaos, family members, friends and people fearing being arrest packed into local churches, which were trusted places where they could receive basic services, counsel, touch base with loved ones and sort out their next steps.

We are preparing that such places of temporary refuge (sanctuary) will be needed again.

The rest of my presentation follows. Scroll down below if you want to join our “hub and spokes of a wheel” approach.

In the case of a raid, people will be looking for a safe place to go: could be a library, community center, but more likely people will opt for a congregation, a place where people can go safely without questions being asked, “houses of God require no documents.”

Should a raid occur, or an action of hate or violence, people may need a place to congregate for respite, consolation, possibly food, shelter and clothing, legal support, social services, and spiritual strengthening.

- For each area (municipality, county), we are looking for congregations that might be willing to step up and provide short-term hospitality (a few hours, a few days, could be a few weeks) – temporary sanctuary – for community members that seek it
- The ask may be on a very short notice, so preparations need to occur now
- The hope is to be coordinated in every jurisdiction with community-based organizations, service providers, advocates, labor unions, other religious communities, and legal advisers.
- Actions will be consistent with the best strategies for people seeking refuge to know and act upon their rights. Faith communities will need to understand how to protect those rights as well (Know Your Rights training).
- We are asking congregations in a particular area to network with one another, to go beyond usual boundaries, or comfort zones, to establish anchor congregations around which the community can rally support as needed.
- We are attempting to ensure that communities which are most likely to be affected have an emergency plan for a central place for support and that this is both communicated informally in local communities and shared with others in the network across the state. This builds solidarity, communication around different experiences, questions and best practices and may help to alleviate the trauma that can occur with worst-case scenarios.
- The attached form is a start for a coordinated response in each area. Each congregation needs to assess its capacity, talk internally, be in touch with other like-minded congregations and fill out the form and get it back to me. If you have relationships with other community groups that can or have offered to work with you, great. If not, let us know and we will try to assist with those connections.
- Certainly, this is not the only way congregations are stepping up. Perhaps, this networking will strengthen our resolve and response to basic human needs in our community, the building of interfaith relationships, and engaging local elected officials.
- This is meant to complement other calls to action: circles of protection, longer-term sanctuary, changing unjust policies, etc.
- The time to begin is now. This is a great opportunity to put this dimension of public faith into collective action.

## Hub and Spokes

We are looking for an “anchor congregation” in each municipality (or more than one in the larger cities) that will serve as a hub, a designated temporary sanctuary, where people seeking refuge can congregate in a time of need. The idea is that other local congregations in the municipality/area will join in and provide direct support to the congregation at the hub. Legal support, social services, advocates, health providers (if necessary) would come in to this congregation.

We invite you to fill out the form, which provides the opportunity to find other supportive congregations and ally with other community groups and resource people who will play a vital role in any short term hospitality. Then, we can assist in preparing the congregation for at least some of the anticipated scenarios. A rapid communications network within each area will help mightily as a response may be needed with little notice.

Clearly, faith communities and community organizations may be developing their own plans in various regions. We honor all the efforts of compassion and solidarity under way. At the same time, awareness of what each other is doing can help with connections and strengthen us all.

We will now list cities or areas where there appears to be a potential hub that can soon be confirmed.

Auburn	Tri-Cities
Burien	Vashon
Pullman	Wenatchee
Redmond	Woodinville
Seattle (Ballard, Capitol Hill, Central District, West Seattle)	
Shoreline	Yakima
Tacoma	

In order not to miss any congregations that may be ready to be a hub, if you are ready to be identified, let me know and I'll follow up with other contacts who can be supportive.

Locations where we need a volunteer congregation or suggested congregation to be a hub:

Bellevue	Olympia
Chehalis	Spokane
Everett	Vancouver

I am always glad to receive your e-mails with updates, questions and concerns: [mramos@thechurchcouncil.org](mailto:mramos@thechurchcouncil.org). Next whole group call for Rapid Response coordination: **Wednesday, March 1, at 3 p.m. The Sanctuary Training will be on Sunday, February 12, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. University Unitarian Church, please RSVP if possible.**

Thanks for all you do and for what we all will do!

Michael