

**Sanctuary Movement Statement**  
**Temple Sinai, Washington, DC**  
**Approved at Board Meeting, February 15, 2017**

**Background:** The Sanctuary Movement is a religious and political campaign in the United States that began in the early 1980s to provide safe-haven for Central American refugees fleeing civil conflict. Today, it is a growing movement of faith and immigrant communities committed to protect and stand with immigrants facing deportation. Members pledge to protect immigrant families and other vulnerable groups who face workplace discrimination, bigotry or deportation.

At the Sanctuary Movement's peak in the mid-1980s, over 150 congregations publicly sponsored and supported undocumented Salvadoran or Guatemalan refugee families. Another 1,000 local Christian and Jewish congregations, several major Protestant denominations, the Conservative and Reform Jewish Movements, and several Catholic orders all endorsed the concept and practice of sanctuary. Sanctuary workers coordinated with activists in Mexico to smuggle Salvadorans and Guatemalans over the border and across the country. Assistance provided to refugees included bail and legal representation, as well as food, medical care, and employment.

The Jewish basis for joining the Sanctuary Movement includes the biblical commandment to establish cities of refuge and to honor the Temple as a place of sanctuary from which people could not be seized by authorities in pursuit; the frequently repeated commandment to welcome the stranger and not to oppress the stranger, widow or orphan. Leviticus 19 explicitly says, "'When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall do him no wrong. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself for you were strangers in the land of Egypt,"; our people's experience as refugees from pogroms in Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; and from the Holocaust; and the fact that the United States and other countries refused safe haven to Jews in both periods as a matter of official policy and practice. In 1986, Temple Sinai joined the Sanctuary Movement with a Board Resolution passed in response to the URJ's national resolution on the movement. You can read that URJ resolution here:

<http://www.urj.org/what-we-believe/resolutions/refugees-and-sanctuary>

The impetus to join the Sanctuary Movement today is urgent. The case of Arizona's Guadalupe García de Rayos, covered in the Washington Post ([https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/02/09/for-decades-immigration-authorities-gave-this-mother-a-pass-wednesday-when-she-checked-in-with-them-they-seized-her/?utm\\_term=.aa93dbf518c3](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/02/09/for-decades-immigration-authorities-gave-this-mother-a-pass-wednesday-when-she-checked-in-with-them-they-seized-her/?utm_term=.aa93dbf518c3)) is instructive. Immigrants who have lived and worked in the United States for decades, including many here in our immediate area, face deportation in a way that never existed for them before. Many who have lived here without documentation remained and worked peacefully and successfully and have become our neighbors and members of our communities with the

full knowledge of immigration officials who viewed them as low priority for enforcement under prosecutorial discretion. Today, these people face the possibility of being suddenly separated from their families, detained without legal counsel and sent to countries where they have no ties, no residence and no opportunity to prepare for resettlement. Our concern extends to those who have legal documentation as well. One immigration policy expert advised us that there is the possibility that a foreign national working legally at Temple Sinai could have their immigration status taken away. For example, some individuals from Central America have "Temporary Protected Status" (TPS) that only provides a work permit and protection from deportation for up to 18 months at a time. It is expected that the Trump administration would likely end these kinds of designations, and those who had TPS would lose their employment authorization and become vulnerable to deportation. I only flag this because we cannot assume that just because a TS employee currently has some form of immigration status that they will necessarily continue to have it into the future - and the number of employees (or their family members) who could be subject to deportation could change at any time.

An informal Sanctuary Movement Task Force consisting of Rabbi Jonathan Roos, Robert Croog, Andrea Dettlebach, Michelle Miller, Mitch Miller, Royce Murray, Elizabeth Roos, Esther Schrader, Linda Singer, and others has examined the background of the Sanctuary Movement, related legal issues, and attended Sanctuary Movement information and training sessions hosted by PICO National Network and its partners.

You can read more information at the RAC's website: <http://www.rac.org/providing-sanctuary-immigrants-facing-deportation>

Or <http://www.sanctuarynotdeportation.org/>

This article tells of a church in Philadelphia currently hosting a man needing Sanctuary:

[https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/27/us/houses-of-worship-poised-to-serve-as-trump-era-immigrant-sanctuaries.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/27/us/houses-of-worship-poised-to-serve-as-trump-era-immigrant-sanctuaries.html?_r=0)

**Actions:** What kinds of actions can a congregation take as part of the Sanctuary Movement?

1. Create a rapid response team and program.
2. Hold "Know Your Rights" and Active By-stander trainings.
3. Take on a case to release someone from detention.
4. Support another congregation that is hosting a family.
5. Host a family or individual facing deportation.

The only precondition for being part of this movement is to be as public as possible about our position.

**Proposal passed by the board:**

Temple Sinai will become a Sanctuary Congregation and accordingly:

A. Temple Sinai will publicly declare itself as a Sanctuary Congregation and part of the Sanctuary Movement by signing relevant petitions and public statements and publicizing as much in any and all possible places including but not limited to the Temple's website, weekly email, Facebook page and other social media accounts connected to Temple Sinai, newspaper and other media stories or any other external news and public sources.

B. Temple Sinai and its members may engage in any of the following activities as a Sanctuary Congregation working as necessary with the URJ and its affiliates, The Washington Interfaith Network (WIN), PICO National Network, Sanctuary DMV and their partner organizations to respond to deportation raids and other situations protected by the Sanctuary Movement:

1. Create a rapid response team
2. Hold "Know Your Rights" and Active By-stander trainings.
3. Host, support and/or attend trainings to take on a case or cases to release someone from detention.
4. Support another congregation that is hosting a family.
5. Host a family or individual facing deportation to live on the Temple's property until their case or status is resolved or the threat of deportation ends under the following conditions:
  - a. Unless otherwise authorized by the Board, The Temple will host only individuals or families who are current members of the Temple, Temple employees and/or their family members, or others who have a relationship with the Temple (e.g. Sinai House residents, Project Mensch or Gendler Grapevine support recipients, etc.).
  - b. The Temple only seeks to host individuals or families in the spirit of Sanctuary. It is not the Temple's intention to host or provide sanctuary to anyone whose situation involves illegal activity other than related to immigration and/or residence or work status. The clergy and officers together will determine the appropriateness of any person or family for sanctuary hosting in our building and inform the board within 7 days of a party taking up sanctuary residence on our property.
  - c. The board has the right to review whether sanctuary hosting is meeting these requirements and, after meeting with the individual or family and reviewing reports from clergy, officers and supporting organizations, to revoke Sanctuary with at least 24 hours notice to the individual or family. In case of emergency, criminal activity or any other circumstances that warrant immediate expulsion from the Temple property, the majority decision of the Senior Rabbi, Executive Director and Temple President or next available ranking officer together shall make such determination.

C. While the clergy and Temple staff will bear much of the daily duties of being a Sanctuary Congregation, the Social Action Committee or its designate (such as a

Sanctuary Task Force) shall be responsible for the implementation and administration, including financial obligations, of any programs or services related to being a Sanctuary Congregation. Financial obligations as well as donations specifically related to Sanctuary Movement will be handled through the Rabbi Eugene Lipman Social Action and Tzedakah Fund.

This proposal is effective immediately upon positive vote of the Board and remains in place until such time as revoked or changed by the Board.