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When I think about my involvement with the immigrant community, I think about addressing systemic issues as well as providing direct service to people. For me, it is essential to have real-life experiences and faces to provide context to my organizing and resistance work.

I have been blessed to be involved with the Migrant Ministry group at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in New Berlin, Wisconsin. This group formed during the pandemic to provide food to people who had recently arrived in our country. I joined about three years ago. I have had opportunities to provide transportation to families, attend doctor and dentist appointments, support school registration and participation, and teach English at home.

Through Migrant Ministry, I am part of two wrap-around teams. When services were reduced or eliminated, small groups formed around families to fill in the gaps. The experience of shopping for Halal meat, helping write checks for bills, navigating the bus system, and being "on call" for emergencies like getting locked out of the apartment has broadened my empathy and compassion for the experiences of recent arrivals in our country.

I also volunteer through Catholic Charities to teach English to a Rohingya family in their home. Two times per week, we trudge up the stairs to a second-floor room and spend an hour learning spoken and written English. The materials are provided, and I work through the lessons, teaching vocabulary and common phrases. In the process, volunteers become friends with the family and serve as both confidante and support. When the family car was involved in a car accident, we again saw the struggles and hardships faced by immigrant families. Negotiating the police report at the station, calling the insurance company to make a claim, finding a repair shop, and arranging alternate transportation to work and doctor appointments were all difficult. I was glad I could walk with them as they negotiated these challenges.

With the faces of my friends in mind, I have worked to educate myself and become an activist to support systemic change. I attended Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal's online Resistance Lab to learn about community organizing and effective strategies to resist authoritarianism. After the first training, I opened my home to small groups to share the information we learned. On October 19, The Resistance Lab is offering an online session specifically about Immigration. You may want to check it out: <https://www.mobilize.us/pramilaforcongress/event/823926/>.

Following Voces de la Frontera (vdlf.org) on social media has been a wonderful way to stay informed about current efforts and needs in our community. Through Catholic Charities Immigration Services, I was trained on how to support individuals with family preparedness plans. These plans included legal paperwork identifying who would care for the children if both parents were deported, who would manage the family's property and bank accounts,

and how to obtain the children's passports in case the parents were sent out of the country, allowing the children to reunite with them.

I co-taught an eight-week course through JustFaith Ministries (justfaith.org) titled "Faith and Immigration Justice." Through reading, guest speakers, videos, and immersion experience, our group learned more about our country's history of immigration and the call of our faith to welcome the stranger. I am looking forward to co-teaching this course again in the fall with a new group.

I regularly call my representatives to express my frustration and give my feedback concerning issues surrounding the recent wave of violence against immigrants in our country. The 5 Calls app (5calls.org) has been very helpful in providing phone contacts and even specific scripts to use regarding current legislation.

I have protested in front of the ICE building in support of a young paraprofessional in Milwaukee Public Schools who was eventually deported. Protests happen each Friday morning from 9:00-10:00 if you would like to stand against what is happening through ICE in our city.

In my garage, I have a number of protest signs to choose from as I exercise my right to peacefully protest for those who may be afraid to stand publicly. On Saturday mornings at 10:00, when I am free, you will find me at the corner of 76th and Layton Avenue with my sign. Make sure you honk as you drive by!

Finally, I find that it is important to find other like-minded people with whom I can stand together in this work. There is a small group of amazing women at my parish who have become my support and encouragers. We have been dubbed the Active Nonviolence Committee, but I prefer The Merry Band of Nonviolent Friends. We have conducted prayer services, written emails for the Season for Nonviolence, participated in protests, volunteered at a meal program, and developed a webpage, all of which encourage active resistance. In January, we will teach a session at our parish about non-violence and how to bring our prayer into action.

A recent homily reminded us that prayer should lead to the moving of our feet. As a Church, I know we are responsible for welcoming the stranger, and that calls me forward into action. I am inspired by the poem [First They Came](#) by Pastor Martin Niemoller. I added my own verse for our situation today:

Then they came for the immigrant,
and I did not speak out
because I am not an immigrant.
Then they came for me,
and there was no one left
to speak for me.