

This week, our vestry voted to support [ICE Out legislation](#) that will come before Philadelphia City Council later this month. The set of bills puts limits on how ICE can conduct its enforcement efforts in our city, and attempts to protect immigrants and observers from the violence we have witnessed in Minneapolis and elsewhere.

We were asked to consider this by New Sanctuary Movement, a coalition of faith communities. Vestry was asked to consider this by St Martins' own Refugee and Immigrant Committee.

This was a step taken with thought, discussion, and prayer. We know it's a big step. At the same time, the actions and harm we have been witnessing in the news feel like they compel a response from people of faith.

We do not speak in a vacuum. Over 150 Episcopal Bishops, including our own, [issued a letter and video](#) decrying the recent incidents involving immigrants and observers, and calling for ICE to respect the dignity of the people they are called to serve. Catholic Bishops and Cardinals have also spoken out against harsh treatment of immigrants in recent weeks.

We can look back into our history to think about times faith leaders and communities have been directly involved in advocacy. We can think about times Christians have acted and spoken up. And we can reflect on times we have been silent.

Supporting this particular set of bills helps ensure that they will remain strong as they move toward passage. Our support, and the bills themselves, are only small steps in one issue confronting us today. We are doing one thing we can do, a big step for St Martin's and our small contribution to a more just and grace-filled world.

You may have questions and thoughts about this, and I would welcome them. It is not easy being church (or being human in general!) in these days. We need to continue to reflect, to listen, and to learn, as we try to follow Christ's command to love our neighbor.

Mary+