



SOCIAL JUSTICE AND PEACE

THROUGH INTERFAITH
UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION

“And let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them.”

Exodus 25:8

“My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”

Isaiah 56:7, Mark 11:17

“That light shines through houses of worship which Allah has ordered to be raised, and where His Name is mentioned. He is glorified there morning and evening by men who are not distracted—either by buying or selling—from Allah’s remembrance, or performing prayer, or paying alms.”

Qu’ran al-Nur: 24: 36-37

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me.”

Matthew 25:35

“When a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not disparage them. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be as a native born from among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

Leviticus 19:33-34

A Covenant to Protect the Sanctity of Sacred Spaces

[This statement was drafted by the Program Council of Interfaith Works to invite faith communities, faith leaders, and community members to join in a public statement of solidarity and commitment. Our hope is that this effort fosters awareness, relationship, and deeper connections.]

While initiated by Interfaith Works, this is a living document shaped by those who choose to sign it. We welcome the continued growth of community among all who choose to sign on and will work to enhance and support those connections. Dated: late January, 2025]

To whom it may concern:

All of us—clergy and congregants, guides and those seeking guidance—have created sacred spaces for worship, prayer, meditation, and the practices that awaken, nurture, and sustain our spiritual lives. These spaces go by many names: church, temple, synagogue, mosque, zendo, monastery, meeting house, spiritual community, and more.

For centuries, a hallmark of all but the most brutal societies has been the principle that sacred spaces—and those seeking refuge in them—must remain beyond the coercive presence of civil authorities. Even when not explicitly enshrined in law or regulation, this principle has been widely respected, except in the most dire emergencies where immediate threats to life and public safety exist.

The President of the United States has now publicly proclaimed and directed that this principle will no longer be honored. Rather, they have directed federal immigration agents to root out and deport any persons who cannot prove they have come over our borders with explicit government sanction, even when they seek protection and shelter in one of our sacred spaces.

These agents have been instructed that it is now acceptable to pull the faithful from prayers, children from classrooms, and the sick from hospital beds and emergency rooms in this endeavor. We do not, must not, and will not accept this.

****Visit the website to view the letter's co-signatures.**

(360) 357-7224 | www.interfaith-works.org/protect-sacred-spaces | PO Box 1221, Olympia WA 98507

In response to this violation of sanctuary in our sacred spaces, the co-signed pledge that,

We will treat any invasion of one of our sacred spaces as an invasion into the sacred space of every one of us.

When called upon, we will respond and bear witness to such invasions within our broader community, sharing notice through word and image with our congregations, local and state authorities, and the public. We will urge our elected representatives at all levels to speak out against these policies and advocate for the protection of these sacred spaces for the well-being of our communities.

We will educate ourselves and our leaders on the legal and constitutional means available to protect all who seek refuge in our sacred spaces. We commit to teaching and exercising our 4th and 5th Amendment rights in solidarity with the most vulnerable.

We will coordinate our efforts with educators, healthcare professionals, and state and local authorities who have committed to using their resources to protect all our neighbors through the enforcement of local, state, and federal law.

We will urge those in our regional and national denominations to adopt similar policies and actions.

We stand together in unwavering commitment to the sanctity of our sacred spaces and the dignity of those who seek refuge within them. Our faiths call us to compassion, justice, and the protection of the most vulnerable, and we will not falter in this sacred duty. May our collective resolve serve as a beacon of hope and a shield against injustice, ensuring that no house of worship is turned into a place of fear.

****Visit the website to view the letter's co-signatures.**