

# Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council

P.O. BOX 662, Bellevue, WA 98009-0662

## March 14, 2017 Meeting Minutes

The meeting was held in Bristol Hall of St. Margaret's Episcopal Church and began at 12:00 noon and ended at 1:30 PM.

**WELCOME:** People helped themselves to lunch and the meeting was called to order and conducted by EISCC President Tony Copes.

**OPENING PRAYER:** Gordon Wilson

**SELF-INTRODUCTIONS** were made by 28 representatives and guests.

**MINUTES** of the January 14, 2017 and February 14, 2017 meetings as drafted by Secretary Karen Studders were approved by the board. No changes were suggested by members. Both minutes were approved by the membership.

### TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Warren Marquardson reported our account balance of about \$94,000. Approximately \$53,000 Backpack Meals, \$25,000 Congregations for Kids and \$16,000 EISCC. Our 990 was filed and is available on our website.

**PROGRAM: Sanctuary Movement** by Michael Ramos, Church Council of Greater Seattle

Michael thanked the Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council for the opportunity to present a brief introduction to the Sanctuary Movement. He relayed that the Church Council is active and met with four clusters of clergy in 7 cities in the past few weeks and has 10 more meetings scheduled in coming weeks.

He commended the LDS Church for opening its doors when the Bellevue mosque burned down. Michael appreciated that the Bellevue police chief spoke in Arabic at the opening of the community gathering of support. His actions communicated the message, "trust in police" and "the police are there to protect people."

In the face of fear on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 100 religious leaders stood in solidarity with the Sikh community. Christians, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, Hindu and Unitarians stood together.

Sanctuary-hub congregations are forming in every city in Washington. Last Sunday 70 people met from congregations. 90 people met four weeks ago. Approximately 200 people are in conversations across the state.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> travel ban was issued and is being heard in court this week. It affects six Muslim countries.

For perspective, agencies are cutting the number of people allowed to immigrate into the US. The 110,000 annual number is being reduced to 50,000. 35,000 already admitted and is being reduced to 15,000 total.

Are you aware of how complicated the vetting process is? All are encouraged to watch the 21 steps of vetting as shown on KING 5 in January 2017. <http://www.king5.com/ext/news/nation-now/trumps-extreme-vetting-for-refugees-already-here-column/281/nationnow/3IzKHNgFNeWi4MIolegcs8>

Fear is in the families and they fear that the ban will be expanded to 10 countries. Other Executive Orders include:

1. People who are not permanent residents. Maybe undocumented. Obama arrested those who had committed serious felonies. Trump is arresting anyone suspected of having committed any crime.
2. If in the US less than 2 years, automatic deportation.

Met with Senator Cantwell last Friday. People are afraid. There is permissiveness; taking law into own hands.

Our job is to alleviate human suffering, remove fear and walk with people. Jim Patten, Church Council Chair is fully supportive. Churches are called to provide “sanctuary.” Similar to the Underground Railroad. Welcome people. Provide moral voice.

In the last 7 days, Michael has discussed sanctuary in Tacoma, Renton, Mt. Vernon, Wenatchee and Bellevue.

Michael provided two handouts for everyone to take as you leave, “Upholding Sanctuary in the Faith Community” and “Washington State Large-Scale Immigration Raid Response Template.” Copies are attached to the minutes.

Some questions for congregations to ask themselves:

1. Do we have space? Do we have resources?
2. Do we have a committee of people to educate our congregants?
3. Are we ready to provide spiritual support?
4. Are we ready to know our own rights?

Secretary Kelly of Homeland Security says that congregations are “sensitive locations.”

5. Can we host families?
6. Can we host someone facing deportation?

The discernment process can take a congregation 3-9 months. Every congregation, major universities and hospitals are asking themselves, “What do we do to prepare?” Faith communities can be proactive. IRC, International Rescue Committee, assists refugee families in Greater Seattle. Providing respite/shelter in case of a raid. All response are valid and needed. Discern and choose.

ICE arrested 6 people as they exited a homeless shelter. In Tacoma, at Guadalupe House, someone did not open the door when ICE knocked. 200 signatures on letter to Sikh community were well-received.

Questions and Answers:

1. Congregations don’t necessarily exercise our own rights.
2. If someone at a congregation wants to learn their rights, they can contact:
  - a. Eastside IRC, [https://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory/organization.394186-International Rescue Committee Seattle Office](https://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory/organization.394186-International%20Rescue%20Committee%20Seattle%20Office)
  - b. NWIRP website, <https://www.nwirp.org>
  - c. One America for advocacy, see <http://weareoneamerica.org/>
  - d. Human Services Resource Guide for Immigrants in King and Pierce Counties, see <https://thechurchcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/SinFronterasGuide-2.pdf>
  - e. Shelter leaders need to talk to legal resources to know and assert their rights
3. If congregations don’t own their building and individual members are interested in assisting, contact Michael directly at [mramos@thechurchcouncil.org](mailto:mramos@thechurchcouncil.org)
4. Wondering if we need to establish a pipeline from here to the border.
5. Agencies place refugees. People are seeking harbor for some Muslim families.
6. Church Council is akin to the hub of hubs, but not coordinating individual congregations. There is no hub yet established on the Eastside; four congregations are in discernment regarding their roles. If you are interested in learning more, provide your name, email and organization to opt in to get more information, by sending your information to [mramos@thechurchcouncil.org](mailto:mramos@thechurchcouncil.org)
7. Ask “Where do people feel vulnerable?” Prepare now.
8. Auburn and Kent. We’ve got your back. Do our part. People are crossing boundaries and working together.

**SPOTLIGHT: LifeSpring** Jennifer Fischer, Executive Director and Juan Arroyo, Programs and Services Manager

LifeSpring is the oldest non-profit on the Eastside, formerly Overlake Service League and 106 years old. The organization only serves Bellevue residents. LifeSpring serves the child first, then their family.

3,700 children in poverty in Bellevue: 187 students experiencing homelessness at beginning of school year; 250 students experiencing homelessness at the end of the school year.

Provide basic human needs – food, clothing, emergency financial support, summer school break food district wide, back to school clothing of \$250. Operate a Thrift store at Bellevue Square. Provide college scholarships for high school seniors. Adopt a family, May 1 sign-up.

LifeSpring is a member of Eastside Pathways. 3/30 annual benefit with featured speaker John Stoddard, chairman of the Mariners. LifeSpring is moving its offices into Bellevue Square. They will be the first charity to be located in Bellevue Square. Don't accept government funding; July 1 start fundraising year all over.

**REFRESHMENT COORDINATOR** Sandy Lewis:

Please thank Tony Copes & Trish Rogers, Farida Hakim, Anne St. Germain, Warren Marquardson and Josh Terlow who provided the food for today's meeting.

## **REPORTS:**

**President's Board Report:** Tony Copes commented on the Sanctuary movement that his congregation is participating in and expressed gratitude for what the Church Council of Greater Seattle is doing with congregations and for refugees and immigrants in our community.

**Backpack Meals:** Cheryl Kuhn, Board Chair

Backpack Meals filled 360 backpacks for the weekend; St. Margaret's, Eastshore Unitarian, St. Louise and MAPS are doing the work.

**Congregations for Kids:** Nancy Jacobs

Congregations for Kids helped over 1400 kids with backpacks and/or school supplies in Bellevue this school year. The number of students experiencing homelessness is increasing:

- In 2016: final number was 250.
- In Feb 2017 already 232 kids experiencing homelessness.
- In Oct 2016 the number was 149 kids experiencing homelessness.

**EISCC Legislative Coordinator:** Jean Harris was absent but provided a report via email read by Karen Studders To contact your state legislators, call **1-800-562-6000**. Tell them where you live and they'll provide you contact information for your legislators. **Email or postcards are the best way to reach state legislators.**

- SB 5023 passed and averted legislative cliff
- HB 1508 Breakfast After the Bell passed
- HB 1783 Legal Financial Obligations, LFOs, passed

**Hopelink:** Brittany Holmes was absent and no report

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Sandy Lewis announced that **Hearts & Hammers** is May 6<sup>th</sup> and if you are interested, please contact her at 425-562-1228. This is a collaborative ministry supported by five congregations over one weekend each year. Teams of volunteers provide labor and supplies to help with major household repairs, small renovations, yard-work and cleaning for local households. This ministry has been supported by fund-raising within the participating congregations. LDS ward provides dozens of volunteers. **They NEED houses to work on!** Expect 200 volunteers to work on 10 houses.

Karina O'Malley announced that on April 3<sup>rd</sup> the **emergency women's shelter** is now again being operated by The Sophia Way is moving from **Holy Cross** to **Overlake Presbyterian**.

The Eastside **emergency family shelter** is operated by Catholic Community Services and received funding so it can operate into the summer months. The family shelter needs host congregations.

Trish Rogers announced that LifeWire's 35<sup>th</sup> annual World of Hope Gala and Auction is May 6<sup>th</sup>.

Elizabeth Maupin had several announcements:

- 3/15 6:30-8:30 PM Interfaith meeting at St. Luke's in Renton
- 3/19 3:30 PM hate Crime information North Bellevue UCC
- 3/22 6 PM Community Immigrant Forum
- 3/31 **Intersectionality Talk: We're Stronger Together, Got Green and NAACP**
- 4/6 Issaquah-Sammamish Interfaith Coalition monthly meeting

Karen Studders announced Seattle-King County Coalition on Homelessness (SCKCH) is hosting **Immigration 101** on 3/17 presented by the Northwest Immigration Rights Project. And that All Home is convening numerous trainings to assist in helping providers move toward changing programs to rapidly house people currently experiencing homelessness. There is an all-day **Best Practices in Emergency Shelters** on 3/29, which is beneficial for faith communities opening their doors and parking lots to provide emergency shelter to people experiencing homelessness.

**ACTION NEEDED:** Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council served as the fiscal agent for Congregations for the Homeless in its early years. EISCC supports this siting of the permanent men's shelter and supportive housing within the City of Bellevue. The City of Bellevue is accepting comments regarding the **proposed permanent men's shelter and supporting permanent housing at Eastgate**. Several public meetings have been held. The City of Bellevue and King County are working in partnership with Congregations for the Homeless & Imagine Housing. The site being studied is at 14350 SE Eastgate Way. Information can be found at <http://www.bellevuewa.gov/eastside-mens-shelter.htm>. .

**Please attend the 4/3/17 City Council Meeting and speak at 6 PM.** Please write and send emails/ letters to [EastsideMensShelter@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:EastsideMensShelter@bellevuewa.gov) or call Mike McCormick Huentelman at 425-452-4089, or contact Bellevue City Councilmembers directly at [council@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:council@bellevuewa.gov).

CLOSING PRAYER: Elizabeth Maupin

**THE NEXT EISCC MEETING will take place on Tuesday, April 11, 2017, 12:00 – 1:30 pm**

**PROGRAM: Washington's Paramount Duty, WPD, to fund education** by Rebecca Vaux and Aaron Horton

LOCATION: St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, Bristol Hall, 4228 Factoria Boulevard SE, Bellevue, WA

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Karen Studders  
Secretary, Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council Board*