

Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council Minutes
GENERAL MEETING: TUESDAY, September 9, 2025

Welcome: EISCC President Kevin Folkman

Opening Prayer

Acknowledgment of Indigenous Lands and Peoples

Participants: 19 in the room, 18 online. Full list of those who signed in appears at the end of the minutes.

BRIEF REPORTS:

- Secretary & Treasurer (see www.eiscc.net for [minutes](#) and [financial report](#))
 - The Treasurer reported \$17,853 in assets. \$161,300 is allocated to Congregations for Kids.
 - The secretary reported on behalf of the Nominating Committee. The slate is
 - Linda Hillesheim, Past President
 - Keving Folkman, President
 - Warren Marquardson, Treasurer
 - Susan Cozzens and Pauline O'Hare, co-secretaries
 - At Large Board members: Khizer Sheriff, David Bowling, Joyce Kidd-Miller, Ellen Weiss Phelps
 - The election will take place at the Annual Meeting in October. There are still open positions on the Board. Nominations can be sent to ahead of the meeting to the Nominating Committee: Tammy Waddell (tammy@nourishingnetworks.net) and David Bowling (davidb@eastside-foundation.org), with a copy to President Kevin Folkman (kfolkman@gmail.com).
- Congregations for Kids (Nancy Jacobs reporting). This was C4K's 30th year. This year the project gave 1276 backpacks to students in the Bellevue School District. In addition, 664 school supply kits were sent to the schools, to be distributed there to families who need them. The numbers requested per school varied widely. Every kindergarten packet included a picture dictionary. Everything went well in the distribution. The project thanks participating congregations for their support.
- Linda Hillesheim reported that the Eastside Human Services Forum is in conversations with the Together Center and Alliance of Eastside Agencies to combine efforts. If you have thoughts on this opportunity, please send them to Linda (linda.hillesheim@gmail.com)

PROGRAM:

Spotlight: Jen Kirk, Executive Director, presented the work of [Reclaim](#). Reclaim has been serving people experiencing homelessness in the Snoqualmie Valley for the last 13 years. They are now also serving people who are threatened with being unhoused. Their building in downtown Snoqualmie is called the Front Door, to distinguish it from the expectation in the past that people who need help would come in the back door. They offer free clothing, small household items, emergency food, transit passes, gift cards for gas, motel vouchers, laundry carts to do wash at a nearby laundry, and other items. They pay for 14 rooms a night in short term housing and offer severe weather shelter seasonally.

Reclaim is partnering with the Snoqualmie Tribe on a new program called Resilience Rising, around gender-based violence. The program prioritizes indigenous women and their families but will serve anyone as long as they are fleeing domestic violence or trafficking. Trafficking is a “whole new ballgame,” Jen noted, requiring new training for their staff. Reclaim is also partnering with the Snoqualmie Valley Hospital to do onsite forensic testing in relation to assault incidents. After the testing, they work with the hospital to find safe shelter for the survivors.

Reclaim’s [annual fundraiser](#) event is coming on September 27. Cash donations are crucial at this moment. They are very concerned about what is coming in 2026 and 2027 for their clients. Every one of their clients is on SNAP and Medicaid, where severe cuts are scheduled. They spend \$10,000 per week on motel rooms for short-term shelter. They have lots of opportunities to volunteer but are not able to accept clothing donations at this time.

To address the issues over the longer-term, Jen urged EISCC members to put steady, urgent pressure on elected officials with regard to housing, housing, housing, housing. While we rely on shelters, she noted, we are perpetuating chronic homelessness, a whole different kind of hopelessness. We need to get people off the streets and into housing as soon as possible.

Main presentation. Alexis Harden and Karen Martiniez presented the work of [Lifewire](#) in addressing domestic violence (DV). Their goals were to help us identify domestic violence and be aware of the services Lifewire provides. The full set of slides is available [here](#).

Lifewire was founded in 1982 by volunteers. Using a survivor-driven approach, it has reached more than 176,000 survivors. It focuses on education and prevention, survivor-driven advocacy (safety planning, systems navigation, etc.), and homelessness and housing stability (rapid rehousing, emergency and transitional shelter, rental assistance). Their key values are confidentiality, respect, empathy, no judgement, and selfcare, both for survivors and those providing care.

A section of the presentation covers terminology. *Domestic violence* is an umbrella term covering many relationships. Lifewire uses the term *survivor*, rather than *victim*, to refer to the person who has been harmed. The phrase *intimate partner violence* is used to refer to using a relationship to gain power and control, creating a fixed imbalance of power, with the effect of control and isolation from outside supports and networks. Domestic violence takes many forms, including using children as pawns, social media, pet abuse, and many others. See detailed lists of what fits under these terms in the [presentation](#).

Anyone can experience domestic violence; DV is not limited by age or status. One in four women and one in seven men over the age of 18 in the U.S. has been the victim of severe domestic violence. In the state of Washington in 2023, DV offenses made up nearly half of all “crimes against persons.”

To support a survivor, one needs to listen actively. Survivors need to feel safe and heard. Listeners need to consider both their implicit and explicit biases and not to overstep their roles. Survivors face many barriers to fleeing from the abusive situation. Lifewire does safety planning with the survivor, not for the survivor, thinking of them holistically and taking their particular risks and barriers into account. Lifewire provides these survivor-driven services one-on-one, based on what the survivor thinks is important for them and their family, including homelessness and housing stability resources. The housing arrangements are provided without charge. To connect with the resources, call the national hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233).

The audience had a number of questions. One asked how to approach a conversation if one sees physical signs that someone has experienced violence. Alexis and Karen stressed that not naming domestic violence is important. Open ended questions will make the individual feel safer, such as “Do you feel safe at home?” We should listen without pressure and without offering solutions, focusing on validating experience as reported.

Are undocumented immigrants particularly at risk. The Lifewire presenters outlined the steps they need to take to protect all survivors, regardless of immigration status. They refer clients to immigration lawyers as needed. Jen Kirk from Reclaim noted that immigration status was playing a role in facilitating trafficking. They have established protocols to prevent unwarranted ICE intrusions into the safe spaces they provide for DV survivors.

Another question noted that most DV happens in the evening or late night. What resources are available at those times? Lifewire can return calls left on voicemail within 24 hours. They return 500 calls a month.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

September 13. "[Interfaith for Impact: Uplifting Girls in East Africa](#)" Operation Bootstrap Africa (OBA), in partnership with Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church, warmly invites you and your community to a special event that celebrates culture, connection, and the power of interfaith collaboration. "Interfaith for Impact: Uplifting Girls in East Africa" is an opportunity to come together, share stories, and learn how we can all support girls and women in East Africa—especially within the Maasai community—through education and empowerment. Complimentary Maasai brunch, meet the author, and raffle. September 13th, 2025, 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM, Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church: 2650 148th Ave SE, Bellevue, WA. Please RSVP at [this link](#).

September 27. Creating Opportunity: An Evening of Giving. [Reclaim](#), a shelter and service organization in North Bend, is bringing together supporters, partners, and friends to raise critical funds for their work in the Snoqualmie Valley – supporting housing stability, safety, and dignity for all. Event details and tickets are available [here](#).

September 28. Aldersgate United Methodist Church's First Missions Fair! Aldersgate UMC (14230 SE Newport Way, Bellevue, WA), Sunday, September 28th.

- Community organizations are providing informational displays and handouts to share their mission, how it supports either the local community or the wider world, how your congregation's involvement has/can affect their work, and how people can get more involved. The Mission fair will be open to the community from 11:30 AM-1 PM.
- If your organization would like to participate, please contact CJ Ingalls (They/Them), Office Manager, [Aldersgate United Methodist Church](#), 14230 SE Newport Way, Bellevue 98006, (425) 746-9800.

October 9. [The Detention Lottery](#). Join First Congregational Church, Bellevue, on Thursday, October 9 at 7 PM (doors open at 6:30 PM) for a 1 hour production of The Detention Lottery to bring awareness to the realities of migrant detention in our country, the hidden costs of detaining migrants to our democracy and communities, and the effect of our immigration enforcement system on millions of US citizens and permanent residents, including millions of children. Following the production there will be a 45-min talk back. Proceeds will benefit Northwest Immigrant Rights Project and Washington Immigration Solidarity Network.

Hopelink updates:

- 30th Annual Reaching Out Celebration, Date: Thursday, October 16, 2025, Time: 5:30 PM – 8:30 PM, Here's the [link](#) to sign up.
- The Hopelink Food Program has recently seen a high number of client sign-ups for food services. Too many zucchini this year? Remember that the Hopelink marketplace takes donations of fresh produce early in the week.
- Hopelink Financial Assistance helps individuals and families with financial assistance based on a randomized drawing selection.

Bellevue Police, as part of a national effort called [Faith & Blue](#), are offering to visit congregations to get better acquainted. Deacon Sam Basta of St. Louise and St. Madeline's Catholic Churches (DeaconSam@StLouise.org), a member of the police advisory board for faith communities, offers to help make connections to this program.

Domestic violence survivor support. Susan Cozzens is looking for others to work with her to explore volunteer opportunities to support domestic violence victims. Many domestic violence incidents happen at night, when professional staff are not available. Volunteers might be able to provide emotional support at those times of greatest trauma. Contact Susan (scozzens@live.com) if you have a concern in this area and would be willing to explore the possibilities further.

Closing Prayer

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Signed in for September 9, 2025

Last Name	First Name	Organization
Backus	Shauna	Congregations for Kids
Basta	Sam	St. Louise Bellevue
Bentsen	Nadine	Cross of Christ
Bogarín	Fabiola	Hopelink
Brandt	Lois	Newport Presbyterian Safe Parking
Buckingham	Brooke	City of Redmond Human Services
Christensen	Troy	Porchlight
Clacy	Jill	Kindering
Cozzens	Susan	Eastside Friends Meeting & EISCC Board
Folkman	Kevin	LDS & EISCC Board
Hamill	Stevi	First Congregational Bellevue
Harden	Alexis	Lifewire

Harris	Jean	Aldersgate UMC
Hillesheim	Linda	Unity of Bellevue & EISCC Board
Hutchko	Candise	Catholic Community Services
Jacobs	Nancy	Congregations for Kids
Kalisa	Isabelle	Hero House
Kidd-Miller	Joyce	Baha'is of King County North & EISCC Board
Kirk	Jennifer	Reclaim
Mabbott	Art	All Saints Episcopal
Madden	Ciara	Plymouth Housing
Marquardson	Warren	LDS & EISCC
Martinez	Karen	Lifewire
Maupin	Elizabeth	Issaquah Sammamish Interfaith Coalition
Mbaye	Amina	Essentials First
O'Hare	Pauline	First Congregational & EISCC Board
Perry	Charles	Unity of Bellevue
Phelps	Ellen Weiss	Temple B'nai Torah & EISCC Board
Richards	Diane	St. Margaret's
Sheriff	Nikki	MCRC Muslim Community Resource Center
Staiger	Joanie	Congregations for Kids
Szabo	Dick	St. Andrews Lutheran
Szabo	Dick	St Andrew's Lutheran Church
Thomas	Ray	rayt2015@gmail.com
Vossler	Michele	St. Andrews Lutheran
Wallin	Scott	Nourishing Networks
Ware	Michaela	The Sophia Way