

Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council

General Meeting, December 9, 2025

Present: 21 people in the room, 15 online. Full list of those who signed in appears at the end of the minutes.

The meeting began with introductions and an opening moment of silent reflection.

President Kevin Folkman shared an acknowledgment of Indigenous Lands and Peoples.

We acknowledge that we are on the Indigenous Land of Coast Salish peoples who have reserved treaty rights to this land, specifically the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe. We thank these caretakers of this land who have lived and continue to live here since time immemorial.

Kevin thanked St. Margaret's for hosting the space we were meeting in and Newport Presbyterian for providing lunch today.

Brief Reports

- *Treasurer.* The financial statements are available at eiscc.net.
- *Secretary* Susan Cozzens asked anyone with a concern about having an AI record our meetings to inform any member of the Board, so that it could consider a policy.
- *Conggregations for Kids.* Nancy Jacobs shared that it was a very stressful time in Bellevue Schools. Need for the emergency funds C4K makes available has been rising sharply. Nancy called attention to the pictures of the project displayed at the back of the room.
- *Severe Weather Shelter Project.* Susan Cozzens reported for the task force that a big positive step had been taken in the past week. Anything Helps had submitted a proposal for providing shelter at Holy Spirit Lutheran Church in Kirkland with spaces for families and couples. The proposal went to the King County Regional Homelessness Authority. The task force is contacting other congregations from its candidate list to explore further opportunities.

SPOTLIGHT. Rabbi Jason Levine, Associate Director, Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of the [Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle](#) shared on their work advocating for the local Jewish community and its allies, including at the legislature and with elected officials. They work in interfaith partnership, in response to direct incidents, and in education, including offering a recent training on antisemitism and anti-Jewish harm. JCRC is a network of 36 organizations, representing a broadly-based collective voice of Jews in the state of Washington. Jews are a multi-ethnic, multi-racial people, diverse in ideology, rituals, and cultures. His program creates spaces for dialogue, among Jews and across faith communities. Among other activities, JCRC recently offered antisemitism training through a progressive lens. They have also offered training on safety and security for places of worship. They work with law enforcement at all different levels, recognizing that for some Jews, police do not represent security. Rabbi Levine welcomes EISCC participants to contact him about future trainings, on this and other topics. He is eager to build relationships with many faith communities.

MAIN PRESENTATION. Elizabeth Dickinson, Partnership Coordinator for the [Faith Action Network](#) (FAN), presented. Her slides are available [here](#). She gave a preview of the main issues FAN will be addressing in the 2026 legislative session, which convenes on January 12. Budget shortfalls will dominate this session. While the governor wants a cuts-only budget with no new revenue, FAN is working towards increased progressive revenue.

FAN is identifying priority actions and starting working groups in the following areas:

- economic justice and ensuring basic needs, including
 - passing a “moral budget” that ensures safety, health food security, energy assistance;
 - enabling housing for all (affordable housing, housing budget, preventing criminalization of the unhoused); and
 - supporting progressive revenue.
- defending and advancing immigrant/refugee rights (preserving immigrant health equity, prohibiting law enforcement from wearing face coverings, legal aid)
- fostering rights, belonging, democracy, and pluralism (Attorney General reform, restricting license plate readers, data and public records protection)
- climate/environmental justice (e.g., protecting the revenue from the Climate Commitment Act for climate response; impacts of data centers on poor communities)

Elizabeth invited us to join FAN’s mailing list to receive action alerts; share our stories; and join Interfaith Advocacy Day on Thursday, February 12. Details are available at fanwa.org.

Participants asked where the information goes when we follow FAN requests and click pro or con for a bill. Elizabeth explained that it goes directly to the legislative committee holding the hearing. They count the pros and cons and take those into account as indicators of stakeholder views. The letters FAN makes available also go directly to the legislators from our districts as well as to the governor.

Elizabeth left us with the thought that the narrative of our faith traditions is an important element of the political context for state decision-making. Our participation makes a difference.

Announcements

- Essentials First is having their first ever advocacy date on January 26, focused on hygiene insecurity. Hygiene items are not covered by SNAP or TANF, so private action is critical in making them available.
- Joseph Henry, Hope On Hope Outreach Ministries, introduced himself and his street ministry in the Belltown area. He welcomes connections at 360-815-6164, tractmaster03@gmail.com.
- In an effort to expand outreach at Kindering, Jill Clacy would love to know if any of our faith-based organizations hold any family/kid events like MOPS (mothers of preschoolers-now known as MomCo) or any other groups that consist of families. Kindering is looking for opportunities to reach more families on the Eastside. Please reach out to jill.clacy@kindering.org if you hold such events.
- The King County Continuum of Care Board needs a few more members to join them immediately. They are particularly looking for three elected officials who have both the time and the passion for this work. They could be elected to the school board, a legislative body, port authority, or judiciary -- it doesn’t matter what elected position they hold as long as they really care about ending homelessness and have the time to commit. Applications were being accepted through Friday, December 12, 2025, but that deadline might be extended. Contact catherine.todd@kcrha.org.

- Susan Cozzens reminded the group that at the last EISCC meeting, we identified things volunteers could do to help families who are afraid to leave their homes. The Safe Haven group has asked us to set up coordinators for these activities. Contact eastsideinterfaith@gmail.com to volunteer.
- Lois Brandt of Newport Presbyterian Safe Parking reminded us that they are closed for the winter, and thanked Lake Washington and St. Jude's for taking their safe parkers during this time.
- The Festival of the Nativity was taking place from December 6 to 14 at the Latter Day Saints campus in Bellevue.
- Linda Hillesheim celebrated the Essentials First Resource Fair, held at the LDS campus, as an example of faith communities opening up our facilities as much as possible.
- Sophia Way hosted a conversation with their directors and the Porchlight director on Monday, December 8, about ways the shelters are responding to the current conditions.

Closing Moment of Reflection

Attendees

Last Name	First Name	Organization
Arndt	Sarah	North Urban Human Services Alliance
Backus	Shauna	Congregations for Kids
Bien	Alaric	City of Redmond Human Services
Bogarin	Fabiola	Hopelink
Bowling	David	Eastside Foundation & EISCC Board
Brandt	Lois	Newport Presbyterian Safe Parking
Burrus	Sue	Eastside Friends Meeting
Clacy	Jill	Kindering
Collier	Greg	Newport Presbyterian
Cozzens	Susan	Eastside Friends Meeting & EISCC Board
Dickinson	Elizabeth	Faith Action Network
Folkman	Katie	LDS
Folkman	Kevin	LDS & EISCC Board

Godfrey	Dave	Eastside Friends Meeting
Hamill	Stevi	First Congregational Bellevue
Harris	Ellia	Old Friends Club
Harris	Jean	Aldersgate UMC
Henry	Joseph	Hope on Hope Ministries
Hillesheim	Linda	Unity of Bellevue & EISCC Board
Jacobs	Nancy	Congregations for Kids
Jones	Carolee	St. Margaret's Thrift Shop
Kidd-Miller	Joyce	Baha'is of King County North & EISCC Board
Levine	Jason	Jewish Community Relations Council
Marquardson	Warren	LDS & EISCC
Mathias	Mike	Anything Helps
Maupin	Elizabeth	Issaquah Sammamish Interfaith Coalition
Mbaye	Amina	Essentials First
O'Hare	Pauline	First Congregational & EISCC Board
Phelps	Ellen Weiss	Temple B'nai Torah & EISCC Board
Reed	Angel	Imagine Housing
Sheriff	Nikki	MCRC Muslim Community Resource Center
Spearin	Amanda	Prison Fellowship
Spohn	Betty	Newport Presbyterian
Torres	Alondra	NAMI Eastside
Wallin	Scott	Nourishing Networks
Weisel	Nancy	Cross of Christ