

4/21/18 endorsed by Board of Trustees

**FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF ALBANY (ALBANY UU)
RESOLUTION TO BECOME A SANCTUARY CONGREGATION**

WHEREAS, we live in a time of heightened risk for immigrants, documented and undocumented, and we consider the deportation of undocumented individuals to be inhumane in many circumstances and fundamentally in conflict with our values; and

WHEREAS, we affirm the time-honored traditions of faith communities that recognized houses of worship as a refuge for fugitive enslaved people, conscientious objectors, and Central American refugees fleeing the civil wars of the 1980s; and

WHEREAS, in 1984 our congregation entered into a covenant with the Albany Friends Meeting (Quakers), declaring both congregations as a sanctuary for those seeking to escape violence in Central America. Our congregation adopted a resolution stating as follows:

“[FUSA], fully cognizant that this resolution may propose an act of civil disobedience, does declare [FUSA] a sanctuary. In solidarity with many faiths throughout the United States, and as a symbolic act, [FUSA] will invite refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala to accept temporary sanctuary with us”

and in fact both the Quakers and our congregation did provide physical sanctuary to refugees; and

WHEREAS, we are mindful of our UU principles that call us to acknowledge the inherent worth and dignity of every person with justice, equity and compassion in human relations, and the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all; and

WHEREAS, the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) for decades has been actively involved in efforts to change federal immigration policy, and to aid and support sanctuary work for refugees and immigrants; and

WHEREAS, in February 2017 the UUA and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee together issued a Declaration of Conscience stating in part that “We will oppose any and all unjust government actions to deport, register, discriminate or despoil. As people of conscience, we declare our commitment to translate our values into action as we stand on the side of love with the most vulnerable among us;” and

WHEREAS, a church that declares itself a Sanctuary Congregation is one willing to engage in a spectrum of solidarity actions, including welcoming undocumented people, advocating to help stop deportations, defending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival Program (DACA), opposing unjust policies that enlist local police to engage in immigration enforcement, and in cases of extreme need physically sheltering individuals in danger of immediate deportation; and

WHEREAS, we have engaged in a process of discernment led by our Social Responsibilities Council (SRC), which has provided information and facilitated congregational conversations about becoming a Sanctuary Congregation; and

WHEREAS, the Albany Friends Meeting has once again voted to become a sanctuary congregation, and it is preparing space within its building to offer temporary housing in certain instances to undocumented individuals.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that we, the members of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany, publicly declare that we are a Sanctuary Congregation. Specifically, we will:

Educate ourselves about the issues of immigration reform and immigrant rights;

Speak out against discrimination toward any and all marginalized people;

Build partnerships with immigrant groups, other faith institutions and all others advocating for just treatment of undocumented immigrants and refugees;

Offer immigrants material support (food, clothing, childcare, transportation, etc.) where there is need and desire for such assistance;

Extend physical sanctuary. We will support the Albany Friends Meeting and other faith institutions serving as physical sanctuary sites for undocumented immigrants. Further, cognizant that we may be engaging in civil disobedience, in cases of extreme need, upon the recommendation of the SRC and with the approval of the Albany UU President, we will offer any available temporary shelter to immigrant(s) facing unjust deportation, while they pursue a legal appeal. Albany UU's minister, its Board of Trustees and the SRC will work collaboratively to address the eligibility and logistical aspects of providing any such temporary shelter; and

Actively publicize our status as a Sanctuary Congregation.

The Social Responsibilities Council will work with the congregation to implement this Resolution and will report to the Board of Trustees on a regular basis.