

Sanctuary Now
Questions from UUCB Members and Answers
October 2017

Why are we doing this? What can I tell others who ask why we're discerning whether to become a Sanctuary Host congregation?

We are doing this because it is in line with the Seven Principles of our Unitarian Universalist Association and our mission of "Actively promoting Unitarian Universalist values here and in the wider world and sustaining these efforts through our culture of social justice and generosity." The current situation, in which stays of deportation are not being granted for humanitarian reasons, is the reason we are discerning becoming a Sanctuary Host Congregation now.

What is the difference between Sanctuary City and a Sanctuary Host?

A Sanctuary City is a city that limits its cooperation with the national government effort to enforce immigration law. A Sanctuary Host offers a person facing deportation a place to stay.

If we host a person with children, how will we transport the child or parent to a doctor's appointment?

This is actually two questions. Any volunteer, friend, or family member can transport the child to a doctor's appointment. This means that it may not necessarily be a church member transporting the child. It is more complicated transporting a guest as they are not protected or secure if they leave the church grounds. Three physicians have volunteered to come to our church to provide medical care to the guest in Sanctuary. Two members have volunteered to transport the guest. And the guest can transport themselves if they have a car.

Do we have a choice in who we host? Do we have enough space for a guest and their children? The archives room seems too small.

The Metro Denver Boulder Sanctuary Coalition, which includes members of the immigrant community, will decide who is in most need of sanctuary. The guest will visit our site to decide if our space is suitable for them (and their children, if applicable). The Sanctuary Now Ministry co-chairs and our minister will meet with the potential guest at that time so that personal introductions can be made.

May we vote in absentia since we will be out of town on 10/29/17 for the vote?

Our bylaws require a member be present to vote.

What security measures will be needed?

The Boulder County Sheriff's office has completed a security audit of our building and made recommendations based on safety for the guest as well as the congregation and preschool. We are in the process of implementing the recommendations. More details will be covered at the training on November 2, 2017 6:30 - 8:00 in the Earth Room.

Will someone be with the guest 24/7?

No, we will stay with the guest as much as they request at the beginning of their stay, but eventually, at times they will be in the building by themselves.

How will being a Sanctuary Host affect our church budget, if at all?

The guest will primarily be financially supported by the Metro Denver Boulder Sanctuary Coalition and other volunteers. Our church will be responsible for minor changes to the building such as a portable shower and updated security measures (locks, smoke alarms etc.). We believe other churches in the Coalition will donate to those improvements, too.

How will members that do not favor being a sanctuary host live with church members who do favor?

As members, we abide by our covenant to walk together in love and loyalty and live out our mission together. We respect each other and our differences. We use the Covenant of Respectful Relationships to work through any conflict.

What if the resolution to become a Sanctuary Host passes and then there is anger because of the resources this will take?

People who are angry will be encouraged to use our Covenant of Respectful Relationships and the Model for Convenantal Conversations (both can be found on our website under Member Documents) to communicate respectfully about their concerns.

How will Sanctuary impact our insurance?

The Board has worked with our insurance company, Church Mutual, and we have complied with all of their requirements. No additional riders or costs will be necessary.

What does the preschool (Active Boulder Kids) think about this and the parents?

The Sanctuary Now Ministry members, Board President, and our minister met with several preschool parents, and answered their questions. Additional meetings are being scheduled to address the concerns of the parents, teachers & administrators. All preschool parents have been invited to attend the safety and security training UUCB is hosting on November 2, 2017. We are implementing the sheriff department's recommendations addressing safety.

How many UUCB volunteers do you think we need to make this work?

Based on what we know from other churches who have hosted, we believe we have recruited a sufficient volunteer base. After the last forum held on October 8th, we had 17 core volunteers and 67 other volunteers from our church. We also have more than 30 volunteers from other local faith organizations signed up to help. The members of the Metro Denver Boulder Sanctuary Coalition will also provide support along with members of the immigrant community and local non-profits. The specific needs will likely vary based on a guest and their requests and needs, and we expect there to be opportunities for one-time volunteers as well as ongoing opportunities, allowing those who wish to contribute to do so in the ways that are meaningful and realistic for them. The volunteer recruiting process will be ongoing to help reduce volunteer burnout.

How do we balance being a Sanctuary Host with our other social justice work? Can our congregation bring pressure for real action on immigration reform?

Being a Host congregation brings about additional responsibilities and operational support. However, our Justice ministries often have overlap between members. All affirm the necessity of recognizing and addressing that the issues we confront are intersectional. Following the lead of marginalized voices in our communities, and being in relation to them helps us to continue to walk alongside those most impacted. Being a Sanctuary Host allows our guests and their community a platform to advocate for broader reform in laws, as well as to help shape public sentiment around the issues that impact them.

Aren't there enough Host congregations in Denver?

There are thousands of immigrants in Colorado at risk for deportation, and who, if resources are available, may be considered for Sanctuary by the Metro Denver Boulder Sanctuary Coalition. Some of the Host congregations in Denver aren't currently able to accept guests because of construction. Geographical distribution of hosts can also be helpful to allow a guest to remain close to their community, family, and support system while in Sanctuary.

What options do we have if it isn't working out with a guest?

We will establish "community guidelines" between our congregation and the immigrant guest. These guidelines will be multi-directional (in other words, we'll have guidelines for the guest, and the guest will have guidelines for us). If those are not being followed, we will use the Model for Covenantal Conversations within our congregation and with the guest. If issues cannot be resolved, the immigrant will seek another sanctuary host site.

How long might a guest stay at our church?

The simple answer to this is "we don't know for sure." The guest could stay just a few weeks, for several years or indefinitely. The longest stay so far is four years. Right now, the two churches in Denver who have hosted before are not available because of construction on their buildings. However, they will likely be available again at some point. Other

churches in Boulder are considering becoming hosts, so it is possible that a guest could rotate to another site if desirable.