

Immigration Task Force leads Interfaith Vigil at Ramsey County Jail

Since October 4, 2009, the MN Conference Task Force on Immigration has been participating in a monthly faith action vigil at the Ramsey County Jail. The vigil calls for comprehensive reform of immigration policy, and supports detained immigrants and their families, elected officials, and jail officials and workers. **The event is from 2:30-3:00 pm the first Sunday of every month, outside the Ramsey County Adult Detention Center, at 425 Grove St. in downtown St. Paul.** Each month the liturgy is planned and led by member groups of the Interfaith Coalition on Immigration. These include The Justice Commission of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Coalition, Paganistan, Islamic Dawah Center, Jewish Community Action, and the Immigration Task Force of the Minnesota Conference, UCC.

"Light in a Time of Darkness" was the theme of the December 6 vigil, which was led by the Minnesota Conference Task Force, Jewish Community Action, and Paganistan. The January 3, 2010 vigil will be led by the Sisters of St. Joseph, and it will be on the theme "We Are All One."

In addition to sponsoring groups and members of their local congregations, immigrants and families of detainees are beginning to participate in the vigils. At the December vigil a Somali Muslim man stepped forward and identified himself as someone who knew the jail very well, as he himself had been a prisoner there for 93 days: "I know what it's like to be on the inside," he said, "and I am here to thank you for not forgetting us and our families."

The Immigration Task Force invites all members of the Minnesota Conference to join us in this ministry of advocacy for immigration policy reform and compassionate solidarity with our immigrant sisters and brothers.

As a blessing in these holy days, we share with you these words from the closing prayer at the December 6 vigil:

"We remember the words of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.: 'Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.' May the light of God's love be with you all.

Don Christensen, member, Minnesota Conference Immigration Task Force