

#8 The Episcopal Diocese of Vermont, a Sanctuary and Refuge for the Vulnerable

SPONSORS: Executive Council of the Diocese of Vermont (Approved August 19, 2025)
Task Force on Becoming a Sanctuary Diocese

CONTACT PERSON: The Rev. Lee Alison Crawford, lacinvt94@gmail.com, 802-279-5164

RESOLVED, That the 193rd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont* declare the Diocese of Vermont to be a Sanctuary Diocese, understanding that to welcome the stranger is part of our response to the Great Commandment, “Love God and love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-34, Luke 10:25-28), and to our identity as Christians; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the congregations and institutions of the Diocese of Vermont consider becoming sanctuary congregations and institutions that serve as places of welcome, refuge, healing, and other forms of material and pastoral support for those targeted by hate due to immigration status or some perceived status of difference (as well as those in vulnerable populations at risk), and that they work alongside friends, families, and neighbors to ensure the dignity and human rights of all people that are guaranteed through the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), the [Convention against Torture, Cruel and Degrading Treatment \(1988\)](#), and the [Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol](#), which the United States ratified and thereby integrated into its national law; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Diocese of Vermont connect with other local and national sanctuary communities and institutions, immigrant rights groups, immigration and human rights attorneys, and coalitions and engage in education, organization, advocacy, direct action and other methods as deemed appropriate in each context to ensure the safety and security of the undocumented community and those who serve them, including congregations and institutions; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Diocese of Vermont assist in equipping congregations, clergy and lay leaders to engage in such work, appropriate to local contexts, capacity, and discernment; and be it further

RESOLVED, That in all interactions with authorities and immigrants, a stance of non-violence be maintained; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Executive Council of the Diocese of Vermont authorize a Task Force on Sanctuary and Refuge for the Vulnerable, dedicated to the work of formation, advocacy, education and support of sanctuary, whose work will end with the 195th Convention in 2027, with the possibility of continuation, as needed.

EXPLANATION

The Task Force on Becoming a Sanctuary Diocese, formed by Executive Council in accordance with the resolution, [Becoming a Sanctuary Diocese](#), adopted at the [192nd] Convention in 2024, has spent the past year educating itself about the practical, historical, theological and theoretical needs of declaring the Diocese of Vermont a sanctuary. Despite the reality that federal authorities no longer respect the traditional understanding that churches, hospitals and schools are sanctuaries, it is all the more important that this diocese join other dioceses (Los Angeles,

California, New Jersey, New York, San Diego, Chicago and Washington, with more exploring this need) in declaring itself a sanctuary diocese.

If authorized to continue, the task force intends to carry out the following tasks:

- provide an action list for the diocese and its congregations, regardless of size, such as nitty-gritty details for how to respond to visits by authorities;
- provide guidance in creating safety protocols (e.g., security questions to people who call the church);
- maintain a commitment to training in de-escalation in resistance in dealing with others and the practice of non-violence in all that we undertake;
- remind people not to over-promise what they can do for vulnerable populations and persons at risk;
- foster relationships with our neighboring dioceses of Montreal, Quebec, NH and ME;
- create a list of those who can be on a “Rapid Response Team”;
- work with Migrant Justice, Vermont Interfaith Action, Vermont Asylum Assistance Project, Grace Initiative Global, Central Vermont Refugee Action Network, Vermont Immigrant Defense Fund;
- communicate to the diocese through The Mountain appropriate resources and news.

Background and Further Reading

The Episcopal Church, through its General Convention, has passed several resolutions that inform the work of this task force and demonstrate that sanctuary, immigration reform and safety of all have been a topic of consideration for quite a while.

- [2024-C031: Migration with Dignity](#)
- [2024-D026: Enable Episcopal Migration Ministries to More Fully Live Out Its Mission](#)
- [2024-D037: Encourage All Ministries of The Episcopal Church to Assess Intersections with Migration](#)
- [2018-C009: Urge Church to Become a Sanctuary in Support of Immigrants](#)
- [2015-D057: Recommit to Giving Sanctuary to Immigrants](#)
- [2009-B006 Advocate for Immigration Reform](#)

[“Episcopal bishops uphold sanctuary policies, oppose threat of immigration arrests in churches,”](#)
by David Paulsen, Episcopal New Service, Posted Jan 24, 2025.

** **Convention numbering:** While numbering of Convention Journals and the numbering used in resolutions have been consistent since 2021, discrepancies prior to 2021 meant the numbering has been off by a year. All 2024 Convention documents identified it as the 191st Convention, but it should have been identified as the 192nd Convention. The 2025 Convention documents are corrected to the 193rd Convention; references above to future and past conventions are consistent with this correction, with corrected past convention numbers in brackets.*