

RefuseFascism.org Faith Task Force

I Am My Brothers Keeper
The Trump/Pence Regime Must Go!
National Faith Weekend May 18-20

Dear Religious Leader and Friends,

A coalition of the faith community met in Los Angeles in January 2018 and resolved to call on you and many others throughout the country to participate in a **National Faith Weekend May 18-20 ~ “I Am My Brother’s Keeper – The Trump/Pence Regime Must Go.”** We must do this for the future of humanity and the planet.

Recent weeks and months have seen serious developments in the consolidation of the Trump/Pence regime, including:

- Threats of war – possibly even nuclear war – with Iran and North Korea;
- The forging of a “war cabinet” consisting of John Bolton, Mike Pompeo and Gina Haspel;
- The unleashing of a comprehensive and major escalation in assaults on Brown and Black immigrants in this country;
- The mobilization of U.S. National Guard troops on the U.S./Mexico border; and
- Plans for constructing military concentration camps for refugees.

Millions of young immigrant lives are in jeopardy. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has targeted leaders in the movement for immigrant rights, conducted massive raids against individuals and businesses (such as *7-Eleven*) in sanctuary cities, and threatened sanctuary churches. Additionally, Trump has ended Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for over a quarter of a million people, and has now ended DACA protections for millions who migrated to the U.S. during their youth. To paraphrase Pastor Martin Niemöller: “First they came for the Muslims, then they came for the immigrants...” We must say, *“Not This Time!”* The voice of the religious community – a voice of moral authority – is needed as never before.

AM I MY BROTHER’S KEEPER? The question rings down through the ages. Religious communities have traditionally responded with a resounding “Yes!” Caring for our sisters and brothers is a key component of what it means to be a person of faith and conscience.

- Judaism: “You shall love your neighbor as you love yourself: I am the SOVEREIGN GOD.” (Leviticus 19:18)
- Christianity: “Those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.” (1 John 4:21)
- Islam: “None of you has faith until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.” (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 13)
- Hinduism: “This is the sum of duty: Do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you.” (Mahabharata 5:1517)
- Buddhism: “In this world hate never yet dispelled hate. Only love dispels hate. This is the law, ancient and inexhaustible.” (Dhammapada)
- Baha’i: “Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship.” (Epistle to the Son of the Wolf)

It is a consistent message in our world’s great religious traditions that we are indeed our brothers and sisters’ keepers. At its heart, this message minimally means at least two things: 1) that we will do our brothers and sisters no harm; and 2) that we will work fervently and tirelessly for their well-being.

So, what do we, as people of faith, do in a time when the powers of this world – especially the Trump/Pence regime in Washington, DC – seem hell bent on causing harm through:

- Unjust and immoral immigration policies and practices,
- legislative efforts to prevent people from accessing health care,
- assaults against the rights and the integrity of women and LGBTQ persons,
- attacks on our sisters and brothers in the Muslim community,
- challenges against people's rights to peaceful protest,
- threats to use nuclear weapons against North Korea and Iran,
- the coddling of white supremacists and the excusing of their racist behaviors, and
- support for policing policies that inordinately target persons of color with violence and incarceration?

What do we do indeed? We are convinced that we cannot sit idly by and merely hope that everything will turn out right, or that someone else will do this. Too much damage has already been done.

In his *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, dated 16 April 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. writes these prescient words that are as true for all twenty-first century American religious communities as they were for the predominantly white Christian churches of 1963:

But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century.

It is especially crucial during this month when we commemorate the 50th anniversary of King's assassination that we affirm the truth that he articulated elsewhere in this same letter: "Justice too long delayed is justice denied." Now is the time when we must work together to build the beloved community of justice and peace about which King spoke and wrote so passionately and eloquently throughout his life.

Religious communities cannot stand on the sidelines in the face of the injustices and atrocities being perpetrated by the Trump/Pence regime. We must stand up and say NO! And, we must join with other people of good will who are rising up to stop the terror that threatens to engulf our nation and world, and to demand that the Trump/Pence regime must go. We refuse to accept the kinds of atrocities that are described above. In the name of humanity, we refuse to accept a fascist America.

Between May 18–20, religious communities around this country will be observing a Faith Weekend based on the theme: "I Am My Brother's Keeper ~ The Trump/Pence Regime Must Go!" We encourage you, as religious leaders, to hold services and preach sermons on this urgent theme at your places of worship. Where possible, join with other religious communities to hold special events, such as ecumenical and interfaith gatherings. In preparation for May 18-20, convene meetings of religious leaders and others in your area to discuss the role of the religious community in the movement to stop the Trump/Pence regime and to make plans for the Faith Weekend.

History has shown what happens when people do not speak out and stand up for each other as injustice and terror are perpetrated by a few against the many. The time to engage is now, before this regime has a chance to fully consolidate its power and oppression. We are our brother's keeper!

In the hope of justice and peace,

Rev. Frank Wulf, Pastor, Echo Park UMC
 Ms. Ernestine Henning, Supervisor (retired), AME Church
 Ramona Toliver, Ward AME Church
 Rev. Luis Barrios, Pastor, Holyrood Episcopal Church
 Rev. Lyda Eddington, Pastor, La Tijera UMC
 Myrian V. Monnet-Cisneros, Pastor, La Trinidad UMC

Email the Faith Task Force of Refuse Fascism to sign this call: faithtaskforce@refusefascism.org