



November 24, 2025

SANCTUARY

The word “sanctuary” can bring to mind a number of things. To many of us — privileged, white, and comfortably cushioned by both finances and position — it probably conjures up an image of the physical space where we attend worship. For us, the sanctuary is a place of peace, sacred and holy, set aside for contemplative worship, music, prayer and reflection.

For millions of our neighbors throughout our own country and around the world, no such word association occurs. For them the word “sanctuary” is at best synonymous with safety. And in many cases only temporary safety. A bare room with a mattress on the floor, a tent that leaks when it rains, a cave, or the underside of a bridge. Their sanctuary is any place where they can feel relatively safe from harm. A place to lay their head at night, eat a humble meal, and perhaps be with family — or at least with people who treat them as family.

In the world we live in today — November 24, 2025 — sanctuaries that are truly safe are becoming increasingly hard to come by. People, marginalized because of race, nationality, gender, undocumented citizenship, poverty, addiction, or mental health issues are being evicted from their homes in record numbers. Homeless people are being rounded up and placed in detention centers. Sanctuary cities are being besieged in the name of politics,

and sanctuary lands are being besieged by climate change.

God promises each of us — the privileged and the seemingly forsaken — the very same thing. He promises to be for us a sanctuary, a dwelling place in this alien and hostile world. As Christians, we speak to him as our refuge and hiding place, our only permanent home in this transitory world. We breathe prayers to God as our rock, and we try hard not fret over our aging bodies and the constant disturbing changes occurring in the world around us. After all, Christ is guiding us to our true home, and in the meantime, he is a sanctuary for us here by his Spirit.

So what are we — the privileged ones — called upon to do in the midst of these times. We are called to do exactly what we are doing here in at St. Andrews — building and repairing dwelling places, provide financing for safe places. Advocating on behalf of immigrants and people being held in detention centers. Raising our voices at rallies and through emails and phone calls to those in leadership positions. These things feel small sometimes in the face the dire news that bombards us on a daily basis. But small things, when done collectively, can make an enormous difference.

~Written by Bonnie Garbrecht

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