

Ecumenical Ministries *of Oregon*

Dear Friends,

I urge you to take a moment to read the letter below from clergy of ten Oregon churches that have committed to participating in a Sunday worship service in response to immigrant children who have been separated from their families.

Please consider joining us this Sunday morning for the "Road to Sheridan" Service, June 24, at 11 a.m. outside the Sheridan Prison.

**In peace,
Jan Musgrove Elfers
EMO President**

Dear Friends,

We are asking all faith leaders and faith communities throughout Oregon to join us in Sheridan for this special moment of prayer-in-action, or share the call and response prayer at the bottom of this message.

This last Wednesday Attorney General Jeff Sessions invoked Romans 13 to validate the amoral separation of immigrant children from their families, and now (as noted by our Christian Elders at "reclaimingjesus.org") people are watching and waiting to see what our churches will say and do. Today you might be tempted to exhale given President Trump's Executive Order, but we know that our broken immigration system has been separating families long before this moment and that it will continue to do so if our laws remained unchanged. Likewise, we know that this administration in particular must be held accountable for its public rhetoric, and here in Oregon that means gaining direct access (so far denied) to immigrant detainees being held at the Federal Correctional Institution in Sheridan, Oregon.

It was announced at the Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice (IMIRJ) press conference earlier today that we will be holding a public worship service this

Sunday morning (6/24) at 11:00a, just outside the Sheridan Prison. Main Parking at Sheridan High School (433 S Bridge St, Sheridan, OR 97378)

For our communities of faith, this can no longer be a time for “business as usual.” We realize that this is short notice, and that it is very difficult and disruptive to change our usual Sunday routines with so little lead time. But given the nature of this national crisis of faith, we believe that difficult disruptions are now called for, and **we are asking all faith leaders and faith communities throughout Oregon to join us in Sheridan for this special moment of prayer-in-action.** As of the sending of this letter, ten churches have committed to participating in some way with a Sunday worship service in Sheridan (for our initial list of participants, see below). In some cases the service at their usual house of worship has been canceled entirely, in others a loose “bare bones” service will remain. But all have committed to handing out this letter to help interpret this dramatic break from business as usual, and it’s our hope and prayer that others will join us in this important gesture (*for more faith resources to help interpret this moment to your communities, check out reclaimingjesus.org*).

Our Sunday Service in Sheridan (called “The Road to Sheridan: Love Leads Us”) will include all the traditional worship elements (communion, prayer, music, sermon, etc.), but it will also include a direct ask of the Prison to allow ongoing clergy access to detainees so they can receive the pastoral care they need and have requested - and so that we can learn more about how they are being treated and whether or not they are being reunited with their children, spouses and other family. If you’d like to participate on Sunday, let us know by emailing ron@imiri.org, but otherwise just plan on showing up on time. **Note that bringing your own chairs or blankets would be very helpful, and packing your own sack lunch might be a good idea.** But all the other liturgical logistics will be taken care of, and we look forward to seeing you there.

In faith and prayer for immigrant families and for our country,
Rev. Chris Craun, *St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church*
Rev. Michael Ellick, *First Congregational United Church of Christ*
Rev. Josh Kingsley, *First Methodist Church, Portland*
Rev. Nathan LeRud, *Trinity Episcopal Cathedral*
Rev. Maria McDowell, *St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church*
Rev. Melissa Reed, *Salt & Light Lutheran Church*
Rev. Kerlin Richter, *Saint David of Wales Episcopal Church*
Rev. Dr. Sara Rosneau, *Waverly Heights United Church of Christ*
Rev. Audrey Schindler, *First Presbyterian, Portland*
Rev. Tara Wilkins, *Bridgeport United Church of Christ*

PS - for those faith communities who aren’t able to join us, but who would like to lift up a common prayer or piece of liturgy in solidarity with us, you can consider using the same Call to Worship that we’ll be using in Sheridan. See below...

Call to Worship

Call: In Ancient Egypt, when Pharaoh made it public policy to kill Hebrew Children, child murder became the law of the land. But people of faith knew better. They knew...

Response: **Only love fulfills the law.**

Call: When Jesus was killed on the cross, he was executed as a criminal, as an "illegal," as an enemy of the state. But people of faith knew better...

Response: **Only love fulfills the law.**

Call: When Turtle Island was stolen from the indigenous tribes that had lived here for thousands of years, when their culture was destroyed and their people were murdered; when human beings were brought here against their will from Africa to be bought and sold as slaves; when Japanese Americans were forced into internment camps and treated like cattle, the law of the land endorsed all these unspeakable and ungodly horrors . But in each of these cases people of faith knew better. They knew...

Response: **Only love fulfills the law.**

Call: Today, as families continue to be separated by an unjust and amoral immigration system, our public officials have had the audacity to invoke our Christian tradition as a perverse justification for their crimes against humanity. In an attempt to hide behind the *letter* of God's law, they have sinned and blasphemed against the *spirit* of God's law. So as people of faith, let us remind them in a loud and clear voice...

Response: **Only love fulfills the law.**

Call: Let us remind our state, our country, and the whole world that *love is the only law*.

Response: **Love is the only law.**

Together: **AMEN.**

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emoregon.org