

Initial Q and A about Nassau Presbyterian Church and Sanctuary Explorations

1. Has Nassau been involved in immigrant issues before? If yes, with whom and in what capacity?

In addition to Nassau's long-standing refugee program our support of local immigrants began with the Eddie Davila case in late 2004. Bob Duncan heard about Eddie's case and, as a result, formed the Immigration Committee. Eddie is a Guatemalan who, at that time, had been in the U.S. for 15+ years, had a citizen wife and three citizen children, owned a house, had a regular job, had never been in trouble and was deported. The Church assisted the family and worked to help his attorney to get Eddie reinstated and were ultimately successful. The following are what we've done since.

Latin American Legal Defense and Education Fund (LALDEF)

- From 2007, before LALDEF established a full-time office in Trenton in 2012, their only office was on Saturdays in the Church. A number of Nassau folks helped, particularly issuing Mercer County ID cards.
- After the Princeton office closed, it was recognized that it was difficult for Princeton residents to obtain cards so issuing cards at the Church was reinstated. It was managed by Nassau people. That started in 2014 and, in 2015, the card operation was moved to the Princeton Public Library and co-managed by Nassau until a part-time LALDEF employee took it over in the middle of 2017.
- Since 2014, Nassau members, 3 most recently, have been teaching ESL in the Trenton office.
- Nassau has been the venue for LALDEF's last two fundraisers in 2016 and 2017.
- We have provided Mission Grants for a number of new initiatives. In 2017, it was for an expansion of their legal assistance program and, in 2018, one is pending that will fund the establishment of the FUTURO program for Princeton students. This will provide volunteer mentors for low income, first-in-a-family students with a chance to go to college.
- Nassau hosted a group of DACA young people overnight on Saturday, February 24, on their way to a march in Washington, DC

Neighborhood Sanctuary Alliance (NSA)

- Through the NSA, Nassau members are continuing to provide transportation to local immigrants to medical appointments, ICE meetings and court appearances.

Asylum Seekers

- In the mid 2000s, members of the Immigration Committee acted as visitors to asylum seekers who were being detained in the Elizabeth Detention Center.
- In 2008, John Nasir, one of those detainees was released with financial support of the Church and many individual members of the congregation and broader community. This support lasted for two years while John's case was being pursued through the courts.

Presbytery

- A member of Nassau chaired the Presbytery Immigration Conference in 2008 and continued to chair the resulting Presbytery Immigration Task Force with other Nassau members involved in both.

NPC Immigration Committee

- In addition to direct support work, the committee made about 35 presentations to church and secular groups providing history and status of immigration policies and advocating for immigrant rights.
- The committee also has sponsored numerous adult education presentations and a table at Communiversity.

2. Has ICE been active in Princeton in recent months, and if so, in what ways?

Yes. ICE has been active in these ways:

- On the morning of the Dreamer march on December 28, 2017, 3 single men were picked up by ICE and have since been deported.
- In early January 2018, a married undocumented couple with 2 citizen daughters was told, during their periodic visit to ICE, that they were required to show up at the ICE office in 5 days with their bags packed ready to be sent back to Guatemala. Upon appeal by their lawyer, their temporary status was continued and they now wear electronic monitoring ankle bracelets and must report to ICE every week while their lawyer prepares an appeal for asylum. People are not optimistic about their long term outlook.
- In February 2018, a man was picked up and detained for picking up workers to take them to work.