



Faith in Action

Jan. 29, 2026

On Jan. 29, pastors from the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) gathered in the basement of Lutheran Church of the Reformation, a community of faith located in the heart of Capitol Hill. They were preparing to engage in public witness for God’s love and justice; they were ready to make good trouble.

Organized by Faith in Action, several faith communities and faith-based organizations joined to protest funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) as part of the Fiscal Year 2026 funding process. The morning included prayer, walking (“praying with our feet”), and meeting with members of Congress in person. Their primary request was that ICE and Customs and Border Protection officers involved in killings be charged and prosecuted, and that all FBI evidence be released to Minnesota law enforcement. The request was not rooted in politics but in morality: separating, persecuting, and murdering our neighbors is immoral.

“We are calling for federal funding for ICE to be blocked and clear standards of accountability and due process be fully implemented—standards that are thorough, transparent, and unbiased,” said Philip Hirsch, bishop of the Metro D.C. Synod. “Because of all that has happened, we ask that ICE leave Minnesota. This is not a call for disorder or defiance of the law. On the contrary, it is a plea for trust in the rule of law itself: trust that laws will be followed, that justice will be pursued, and that no one is placed beyond accountability.”

“We act because we love God, we love our neighbors, and we love our country. Our presence here is an appeal for reasonable measures that safeguard both the dignity of human beings and the peace and safety of our communities. Seeking accountability is not an act of hostility; it is an act of hope.”

More people joined the protest on the Hill, including college students involved in Lutheran Campus Ministry. Those who were unable to join offered prayers and accompaniment in spirit. The pastors knew that arrest was a potential outcome; they had seen faith leaders kneeling in prayer while being handcuffed in Minnesota. Yet the risk was outweighed by the call of moral responsibility. As Hirsch said, “Faithful witness, even when costly, can help bend our common life toward justice, mercy, and peace.”

Many Americans called and emailed their representatives with the same ask. By the end of the day, the Senate did not advance the funding package, with members of both the Republican and Democrat parties voting against it. There is still a long way to go in terms of bipartisan cooperation, but it sparked hope for future reform and accountability.