

2014-2015 TASK FORCE APPLICATION FORM

Final draft due May 10. Congregational vote on Task Forces, June 7.

Task Force Name: Beyond Borders-Sin Fronteras

Lead Organizers:

Laura Heath (551-427-7485, lhealth89@gmail.com)

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Primary purpose and issue:

The purpose of Beyond Borders-Sin Fronteras (formerly Immigration Task Force) is to promote education and awareness of local and global immigration issues through various activities and events. Its purpose is to advocate for local, state and national policy and legislative changes in concert with local partners. We bear witness to our partners' efforts and participate in various actions around immigration. Our overall goals are to educate, bear witness, create awareness, and participate as advocates in immigration issues. In keeping with our congregation's journey toward a multiracial, multicultural, justice-making future, and in affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every person, we take action to support positive social change.

Grounding (How is the purpose grounded in our UU theology and past work---for instance its relationship to our mission, covenant, UU Seven Principles and commitments of the congregation and UU)

The migration of people—driven by economic, social, political and environmental factors—is taking place around the world. Millions are currently in transit, in refugee camps, in detention centers, or living and working in places without full legal status and without access to social services or protection of civil rights.

As UUs we draw on the universal faith tradition of welcoming the stranger and practicing prophetic hospitality. Unitarian Universalists, in accordance with our core values, have consistently supported immigrant workers, families, and immigration reform. The following principles resonate in particular:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

First Parish in Cambridge UU participates actively in the Standing on the Side of Love campaign, which includes solidarity with immigrant families. Our congregation sent a record number of members to "Justice GA" in Phoenix in 2012 and contributed to the Statement of Conscience on Immigration as a Moral Issue.

Opportunity to make a difference: What conditions make the work likely to be successful in making a difference? How will you do this---this can include service, public witness, education, advocacy and community organizing)

Immigration is a hot political issue and conversations on immigration are garnering more and more attention nationally. Beyond Borders-Sin Fronteras has partnerships with several community groups (Centro Presente, Chelsea Collaborative, Brazilian Immigrant Center) that allow us to help make a difference in our community. In 2014, First Parish in Cambridge voted to join the Boston New Sanctuary Movement (BNSM), an interfaith coalition whose leaders include members of our congregation. BNSM, along with UU Mass Action and Standing on the Side of Love, help keep immigration issues in the spotlight and provide multiple opportunities for witness and advocacy, in addition to educational and service events that we organize within First Parish. Beyond Borders-Sin Fronteras also nominates immigrant-led organizations as recipients of the Shared Offering.

Accountability (How will the Task Force work in partnership and be accountable to the communities affected by the issue being worked on? How will it follow our Covenant of Right Relations?)

Beyond Borders-Sin Fronteras includes members of immigrant families and we are continuously educating ourselves about immigrant issues through several channels such as direct contact with affected communities and educational events. Both individually as a congregation and as a member of the Boston New Sanctuary Movement, we participate in advocacy and witness events organized by our community partner organizations. Within our congregation, we continue to educate and invite immigrants both within and outside First Parish to tell their stories.

Fit: (How does the Task Force work fit into congregational life as a whole, including worship, caring for one another, educating all ages, and moral discussion and action)

Immigration has been mentioned in worship and we would be eager to lead another service dedicated to immigration, as has been done in past years. Service and advocacy events such as food drives and vigils allow congregants to learn about and contribute to immigrant justice without a major time commitment, thus contributing to awareness. We intend to continue working with DRE Mandy Neff, who is herself knowledgeable about immigration issues, to provide multigenerational opportunities for education and witness.

Task Force Objectives for church year 2015-2016

- Involve at least 50 members/friends of First Parish in a service, advocacy, or educational event related to immigration.
- Bring at least 10 members/friends of First Parish to every Boston New Sanctuary Movement vigil.
- Encourage the congregation to designate at least one month of the Shared Offering to go to one of our immigrant-led community partners.
- Begin a conversation on offering physical sanctuary at First Parish.

Possible strategies, activities or events planned for church year 2015-2016

- Film viewing and discussion: Immigrants For Sale

- Film viewing and discussion: Trails of Hope and Terror
- “The Crowd”, a play including immigration issues, in worship
- Boston New Sanctuary Movement vigils
- Discussion of offering physical sanctuary at First Parish in Cambridge
- Witness events organized by Centro Presente
- Event including food that allows FPC members to share their immigration stories
- Survey First Parish members regarding topics that they would like to see Beyond Borders/Sin Fronteras address

Organizers:

1. Laura Heath (co-chair)
2. Rebecca Balder (co-chair)
3. Karin Lin
4. Susan Leslie-Pritchard
5. Susan Shepherd

Supporters:

1. Alison Altman
2. Denise Garcia
3. Allegra Stout
4. Michele Sprengnether
5. Charlene Galarneau