

# Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church (ELCA)

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October 26, 2025

Dear Congregation and Community,

## **Families continue to be violently separated in our neighborhood.**

On Friday morning, October 17th, masked agents violated St. Andrew's private property to use our parking lot for a violent kidnapping of people in our neighborhood and then from a nearby car wash. The church did not and would never give permission for our property to be used in this way. We strongly condemn the actions of the agents. We demand an end to these horrific raids.

In our Christian tradition, Jesus teaches frequently about our sacred calling to love strangers and neighbors (Matthew 22:37-40, Mark 12:31, Luke 6:27-28, John 15:12). Lutheranism originated in central Europe and our history contains multiple examples of complicity and courage in the face of authoritarianism. We will not be silent. St. Andrew's has a history of welcoming and including people from around the world as members and leaders in our community. This hospitality is core to our ministry and will never change. We also have a tradition of responding to hate with love. We strive to act as God's hands in the world. In this situation that means bringing transformation and healing in the wake of tragedy.

In response to this harmful incident, St. Andrew's is taking steps to decrease the likelihood of it happening again. We ask all of our neighbors to remain vigilant against these groups of kidnapers by videotaping them from a safe distance and alerting us to any similar activity. Documenting license plate numbers and vehicle details are particularly useful. We will continue to share "know your rights" information and encourage participation in local neighborhood groups like the North Westdale Neighborhood Association and the Mar Vista Community Council so we can stay connected and organized. As a preventive measure, our Church Council is exploring options to restrict access to our parking lot during off hours. We have communicated our protest for the use of our property for these violent activities to our elected officials.

Furthermore, the council of St. Andrew's Lutheran Church is making a donation of \$2000 to the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights ([www.chirla.org](http://www.chirla.org)) to support their legal aid and rapid response services. CHIRLA has been a community leader and an invaluable partner in building solidarity within our diverse city. We do not know who was affected by the violence that occurred on our property, but we pray that God will continue to transform harm into healing for the targeted individuals, families, and communities through these funds. We invite our neighbors to consider joining us in building closer networks of relationship, in organizing for justice, and in donating to this vital organization.

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church Council