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Each time he heard that voice, Samuel ran to the priest Eli, and answered with the Hebrew word “Hineni,” often translated as “Here I am.” Samuel was not saying that he was simply present, like answering a roll call in class. “Hineni” meant an openness to not only hear but also to respond to God’s call. When Eli realized that Samuel was hearing the voice of God, he instructed Samuel to respond, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.” Eli challenged young Samuel to go beyond merely *hearing* the voice of God to *listening* to the word of God.

In the opening talk of the 2023 Synod retreat in Rome, Dominican Fr. Timothy Radcliffe spoke of the [moral obligation to listen](#): “But we will only have a voice if we first listen. God calls to people by name: Abraham, Moses, Samuel. They reply with the beautiful Hebrew word *Hineni*, ‘Here I am.’ We are created to listen to the Lord, and to each other. As they say, we have two ears but only one mouth.”

We need silence and interior stillness to listen deeply. Listening provides insight into the person we encounter that we might not otherwise gain. It means we are not preparing an answer while the person is speaking, but are allowing the other to present thoughts uninterrupted. That level of listening opens us to what we cannot imagine. It gives space to feel the presence of God and to hear the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

As people of faith, our call is to listen, truly listen, in our increasingly polarized and divided world. To listen for the gaps and divergences that help us to move from the “I” to the “we” while still honoring uniqueness. To listen for the voices of those most often left out, those who are pushed to the margins. To listen to those who feel invisible and unheard. To listen to the cry of the earth, which is intertwined with the cry of the poor. Finally, we are called to use that *listening* to discern the will of God and to act accordingly in light of the gospel.

Sr. Louise Lears, SC  
Creation Care Advocacy

**Suggested Action:**



Throughout the 2023 Synod in Rome, a method was used for “conversations in the Spirit.” Learn about, and consider practicing, this way of listening, discerning and acting at [Conversations in the Spirit](#).

### **Suggested Petitions:**

For deeper dialogue and understanding among people of all faith traditions and no faith Traditions, God, hear our prayer.

For those who have been exiled from their homeland because of political unrest or violence, God, hear our prayer.

### **Ignatian Prayer of Solidarity (adapted):**

**God of Solidarity, Open our eyes to see, our ears to hear, and our voices to sing the many praises of you and of those who are on the margins of our world. May we love others, even when love is hard to find. May we seek justice, even when it is against the norm. May we seek communion, even when we want to be our own individual self. May we live in solidarity in all that we do, all that we are, and all that we are becoming.**

**Amen.**

## **Watch FAN's Faith in Democracy 2024 Interfaith Vigil**

At FAN's third annual [Faith in Democracy Interfaith Vigil](#) on January 5, speakers brought forward messages from Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faith traditions that remind Americans to respect and improve our democracy as the best way to resolve political differences nonviolently. The event was an opportunity for people of faith to recommit to being peacemakers and bridge-builders between those still polarized over the events of January 6, 2021.



Our featured speakers were **Sr. Bridget Bearss, Rev. Karen Brau, Dr. Jeffrey Haggray, Rabbi David Saperstein, Imam Dr. Talib Shareef and Rev. Jim Wallis**. Inspirational music from D.C. a cappella group [Reverb](#) and duo [The Sweater Set](#) accompanied the event.

Watch the [recording of the Faith in Democracy vigil on our website](#).

## **Today at 10:30am: Prayer Vigil to Save Asylum**

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition, Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center, Hope Border Institute, and others are gathering **TODAY, January 9 at 10:30am ET** for an interfaith prayer vigil to renew their commitment to welcome immigrants in a faith grounded way. As part of a [day of action to save asylum](#), this event will be **hybrid** - in

RESET.  
RENEW.  
RECOMMIT.

*An interfaith prayer vigil  
in support of asylum*

**person** at the Lutheran Church of the Reformation (212 East Capitol St. NE in Washington, DC) and **live streamed online** from the Las Americas [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

The U.S. asylum system continues to face attack—risking the lives, well-being, and futures of people seeking safety. This contemplative time together will serve as a reminder of our sacred duty to welcome the stranger and advocate for asylum protections. Find [more information here](#).

## Christian Prayer Vigil for Ceasefire in Gaza

This **Saturday, January 13 at 4pm ET (1pm PT)**

Christian faith leaders will gather for a [prayer vigil](#) calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. Franciscan Action Network is a cosponsor of the event along with Churches for Middle East Peace, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Justice Team, Pax Christi USA, and Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns.

The vigil will be hybrid, held in person at the White House and live streamed online on [Churches for Middle East Peace YouTube channel](#).

**CANDLELIGHT PRAYER VIGIL**  
*for a Ceasefire*

Join Christian leaders in prayer for a ceasefire and demilitarization in Israel and Palestine.

The White House  
Lafayette Square, 1600 Penn. Ave NW  
**JAN 13TH | 4 - 5:30 PM EST**  
All faiths welcome  
Electronic candles will be provided

**Church Leaders**  
Register your group to co-sponsor the vigil  
[info@cmap.org](mailto:info@cmap.org)

**Livestream**  
[youtube.com/@ChurchesforMEP](https://youtube.com/@ChurchesforMEP)

## Multifaith Service Honoring Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King

The Coalition for Peace Action (CPFA) and the Princeton Clergy Association will co-host their [Annual Multi-faith Service](#) in honor of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King on **Monday, January 15 from 7:00-8:30pm ET** at Nassau Presbyterian Church in Princeton, NJ. For more information on attending live, [click here](#).



*Coalition for  
Peace Action*

The preacher will be the Rev. Carla Jones Brown, pastor of the Arch Street Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Diverse faith leaders will co-lead the liturgy and a “pick up” Multi-faith Choir will also perform. The Service will also be **livestreamed**, [click here](#) **starting at 6:45pm ET (3:45pm PT) to view it online.**

## Gun Law Scorecards from Giffords and Everytown

GIFFORDS Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence recently launched their [Annual Gun Law Scorecard 2023 edition](#) where all 50 states are ranked and graded on their gun laws.

**2023 GUN LAW  
SCORECARD**

It was found that states with strong gun laws—As and Bs—are also the states that tend to have fewer gun deaths. Gun laws are saving lives right now, across the country. Check out the [2023 Gun Law Scorecard](#) and see how your state stacks up.

[Everytown](#) for Gun Safety has also compared gun control policies across the country, scoring every state on the strength of its gun laws and its rate of gun violence. [See where your state ranks.](#)

## Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

Joining our monthly National Franciscan Justice Circles call is a great way to get a sense of what people in different Circles are doing, connect with other Franciscan hearts and become more informed on different situations and how we can extend our love through advocacy. With threats to permanently restrict the U.S. asylum system at work, on the monthly national call this *Wed. Jan. 10 at 1:00pm PST / 4:00pm ET* we'll hear an immigration update from FAN staff, Sr. Marie Lucey, OSF and we look forward to what actions and updates you have to share as well. Please join us and contact [FAN staff](#) for more information!



Upcoming [Franciscan Justice Circle](#) meetings:

**DE Valley FJC:** Tues. Jan. 9 at 7:00pm ET on zoom

**Monthly National FJC Call:** Wed. Jan. 10 at 1:00pm PT / 4:00pm ET on zoom

**Northern CA FJC:** Wed. Jan. 10 at 7:00pm PT on zoom

**Rochester, NY Area FJC:** Thurs. Jan. 11 at 3:30pm ET on zoom

**NYC-Area FJC:** Thurs. Jan. 11 at 7:30pm ET on zoom

**SoCal FJC:** Thurs. Jan. 11 at 6:00pm PT on zoom

**DC-Area FJC:** Sat. Jan. 13 In Person

Please reach out to [FJC Director Nora Pfeiffer](#), to find out more information and explore connecting with a FJC.