



Statement from Area Clergy to Amherst Town Meeting

4 November 2009

Our nation was founded by men and women who lit a torch of freedom for nations yet unborn. The cause of freedom has cost us dearly, most profoundly in the lives of our service men and women, who often paid with their physical and emotional health, if not with their lives. We dishonor their sacrifices when our country—out of fear and hatred, and without cause or due process of law—imprisons, tortures and otherwise diminishes the dignity of others.

The undersigned clergy of our town and region support the mission of the group Pioneer Valley No More Guantánamos: to work for the human rights, dignity, and release of all those unjustly imprisoned by the U.S. government at Guantánamo Bay. Toward that end, we urge the Town Meeting of Amherst, Mass., to welcome one or two detainees who have already been cleared by the U.S. State Department of any wrongdoing, to make their homes here.

Such hospitality is consistent with the core values of our spiritual communities and in keeping with our works of justice and compassion, which call us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the sick, and visit the imprisoned, the lonely, and the dying.

- The Rev. A. Robert Hirschfeld, Rector, Grace Episcopal Church, Amherst
- The Rev. Vicki Kemper, Pastor, First Congregational Church of Amherst
- The Rev. Allison Wohler, Minister, Unitarian Universalist Meetinghouse of Amherst
- The Rev. Kent Higgins, Protestant Campus Minister, University of Massachusetts
- The Rev. Sarah Buteux, Pastor, First Congregational Church, Hadley
- The Rev. Lyle Seger, Pastor, Wesley United Methodist Church, Hadley
- The Rev. Grace Murray, Pastor, Congregational Church of Leverett

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