News
EarthBeat



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Editor's note: Welcome to NCR's Justice Action Bulletin, where every Tuesday we bring you the latest news on active nonviolence in the service of peace and justice. Do you have news you would like to share? Contact Maria Benevento at mbenevento@ncronline.org.

UNITED STATES — A new group called Colectivo Santuario (Sanctuary Collective) plans to work to help immigrants safely leave sanctuary in churches that protect them from deportation, Rewire News reported Aug. 9.

The group, which has members in Colorado, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and Virginia, is made up of organizers, lawyers and allies from faith communities and is pushing for local legislative action to support those in sanctuary. It is urging legislators and immigration authorities to give immigrants in sanctuary legal status or at least reopen their court cases.

There are 44 public cases of sanctuary nationwide, where immigrants in fear of deportation have been living on church property for weeks, months or over a year in

a relative safety because immigration authorities typically avoid enforcement actions in "sensitive" locations like churches, schools and hospitals. Some people in sanctuary say this protection can feel like a kind of prison since they can't safely leave the property.

WASHINGTON — The Catholic Mobilizing Network released a statement Aug. 14 condemning Nebraska's first execution since 1997. Carey Dean Moore had been killed that morning by lethal injection using four drugs, three of which had never been used in an execution before.

The execution came in the wake of Pope Francis' decision Aug. 2 to change the catechism to call the death penalty "inadmissible," as well as opposition from Nebraska's Catholic bishops and a protest outside of Catholic Gov. Pete Ricketts' church. Ricketts helped finance a campaign to reinstate the death penalty in Nebraska in 2016 after the state legislature overrode his veto to outlaw it in 2015.

BUCKINGHAM COUNTY, Virginia — The Union Hill Baptist community in Buckingham County, founded by freed slaves after the Civil War, is partnering with the nearby Yogaville ashram, a retreat for about 8,000 guests each year to study and practice yoga, to oppose the construction of a natural gas compression station in their community, the Washington Post reported Aug. 18.

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Locals worry that the station, an essential part of Dominion Energy's planned Atlantic Coast Pipeline, will emit toxic chemicals, cause a nuisance with excessive noise and lighting and pose a risk of dangerous explosions. They also worry about water pollution and damage to the environment and say government reports have inaccurately downplayed the area's population density and the importance of its history and culture.

Members of the faith communities have participated in years of marches and rallies, with some even risking arrest. They are looking to a hearing with the State Air Pollution Control Board in September as one of the last opportunities to prevent construction.

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — Saint Joseph's House of Hospitality, a Catholic Worker house in Rochester, New York, is working with a group that returns land to the community in order to provide people with affordable places to live, NextCity reported Aug. 15.

Take Back the Land Rochester has led eviction blockades and aims to take bank-controlled land and give it to community land trusts such as City Roots Community Land Trust that ensure housing on land they own remains affordable.

The city is converting an empty lot into a designated homeless encampment and is planning to turn it over to the land trust, with Saint Joseph's planning to provide services to residents. The Catholic Worker has been supporting residents of a homeless encampment that has been displaced several times.

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