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Louisville, Ky. — October 9, 2019
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A Catholic Church in Louisville is declaring its support for immigrants and refugees and calling on the U.S. government to close detention facilities at the border.

The congregation of St. William Church joined leaders from other local churches in a gathering Tuesday to offer help to immigrants. The 118-year-old church sheltered Central American immigrants fleeing violence in the 1980s, but it no longer has housing facilities.

Members say they are speaking out because of "harsh" enforcement policies at the border by the Trump administration. The church has hung a sign declaring itself a "sanctuary for all."

The Catholic Church has long been a haven for immigrants and refugees. And immigrants in recent years have increasingly sought relief from deportation at houses of worship. Forty-five people currently live in sanctuary at churches across the U.S., up from three in 2015, according to Church World Service.

The Archdiocese of Louisville released a statement Tuesday supporting St. William and calling on its 110 parishes to "respect the dignity of every human person."

St. William won't be housing any immigrants because its former facility has been converted to a youth center. But church member David Horvath said that won't stop church members from seeking out ways to help. The church partners with immigrant support groups and is exploring the idea of setting up a sanctuary network for short-term housing needs.

Horvath said many church members are upset with the government's immigration policies, including blocking asylum seekers, separating children from family members and holding immigrants for long stays in detention centers.

"We're basically creating an immigration policy that is based on humanitarian support," he said.

Church member Dee Allen said it's easy for people to forget about the suffering of immigrants and refugees who are being detained at the border.

"So many innocent people are being hurt is the most offensive thing," Allen said. "You can't just stand by and do nothing."

In a statement, St. William called for immigration policy reform, the reunification of separated families and the immediate closure of border detention facilities.

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