



Faith-Based Principles Informing Public Safety

The following principles emerged out of conversations at 25 houses of worship in Minnesota, spanning Protestant, Catholic, Buddhist, Jewish, and non-denominational settings. Conversations were held between January-September 2022. More than 900 responses were collected and analyzed. Additional context is included in the attached report, and resources and recordings for the project may be found at <https://interfaithaction.org/get-involved/buildingbeloved/>.

Participants explored difficult dilemmas faced by peace officers. They studied scenarios offered by Minnesota Commissioner of Public Safety John Harrington and analyzed how our religious traditions reveal core values that should inform peace officers' responses in those scenarios.

We urge you, as our state-wide policymakers, to incorporate the following four principles into your decisions about specific proposals to build a more effective public safety system in Minnesota:

1. **Take a systems approach to public safety.** Work across agencies to identify and address systemic issues impacting situations where peace officers may be the first to respond (e.g. mental health, homelessness, food insecurity, racism, addiction, domestic violence, gun violence, etc.).
2. **Shift police culture towards a “guardian” model of public safety.** Hire and train peace officers to:
 - a. preserve the sanctity of human life,
 - b. prevent unnecessary use of force,
 - c. engage in collaborative problem-solving, and
 - d. presume innocence.
3. **Foster respect & empathy between peace officers and the community.** Build awareness of the impact of systemic injustices, the challenges of making split-second decisions, and other factors that play a role during crisis situations. Foster stronger relationships between all involved, particularly between BIPOC communities and peace officers.
4. **Acknowledge complexity & work through tensions.** Rather than champion one single or simple solution, work through tensions that arise in prioritizing values (e.g., sanctity of life, bodily safety, justice and equality).

The following 23 houses of worship participated in this project, and endorse these principles:

- Adath Jeshurun Congregation, Minnetonka
- Assumption Catholic Church, Saint Paul
- Beth El Synagogue, Saint Louis Park
- Beth Jacob Congregation, Mendota Heights
- Bethlehem Lutheran Church in the Midway, Saint Paul
- Common Ground Meditation Center, Minneapolis
- Hazel Park United Church of Christ, Saint Paul

- Hill City United Methodist Church, Hill City
- Hope Community Church, Lowertown Saint Paul
- Immanuel Lutheran Church, Saint Paul
- Minnesota Correctional Facility, Lino Lakes
- Minnesota Zen Meditation Center, Minneapolis
- Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis
- Redeemer Lutheran Church, Minneapolis
- St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church, Saint Paul
- St. Anthony Park United Church of Christ, Saint Paul
- St. James Episcopal, Marshall
- St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church, Minneapolis
- St. Paul's United Church of Christ, Saint Paul
- St. Peter Claver Catholic Church, Saint Paul
- St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church, Roseville
- United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, Saint Paul
- Zion Lutheran Church, Saint Paul

The following two houses of worship participated in this project, but did not respond to Interfaith Action about endorsing these principles:

- Forest Hills United Methodist Church, Forest Lake
- Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Maple Grove