

## Noncooperation in the Face of Authoritarianism

By - Bekky Baker, Program Director

What we are witnessing in our country is authoritarianism, and not for the first time. Authoritarians and dictators follow a playbook. They divide and rule. They work to wear us down, picking off one group at a time, and use threats of repression to get institutions to obey in advance. They sow confusion and try to distract us from what is really going on. In turn, we must come together, to play as a team, and resist. We must not cooperate.

Strategic nonviolence offers a wealth of tools to create change. One of the tools that works best against authoritarianism is noncooperation. Noncooperation includes social strikes, boycotts, refusing to pay taxes, jury nullification, rent strikes, walk outs, and more. Gene Sharp says that rulers alone cannot perform the essential functions of our society - like collecting taxes, milking cows, driving buses, running schools, managing factories. Government leaders need us to do that. We, the people, have power.

People power is the struggle and movement for political, economic, or social objectives without the use or threat of violence. It is communities of people who come together to build civil resistance and utilize nonviolent strategies. We can use our people power to refuse to cooperate and to begin to crack the pillars of support - the institutions that uphold the regime. Examples of pillars of support are faith, business, labor, media, civil service, and the military.

Through a wide variety of tactics we can slow, stop, and reverse authoritarianism. It is critical that we keep finding each other and that we continue to build local networks. As Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. says, "Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that."

Stay connected with Ignite Peace as we offer training and more resources on noncooperation. To think about actions you can start taking today, check out our blog post and our "10 Commandments" of Noncooperation at: <https://ignitepeace.org/featured/ten-commandments-of-noncooperation/>



Attendees at an Ignite Peace Noncooperation Training participate in the "Two Hands of Nonviolence" exercise at St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church, March 2026.

# A Letter from Shannon Hughes



The first months of 2026 carried the weight of war, injustice, and loss. With you, we witnessed and mourned the violent deaths of Renee Good and Alex Pretti, two community members who believed the violence of ICE actions and detainments should not happen in the dark. Their deaths, which sparked public outcry, led many to learn that 32 people died in ICE custody in 2025 – a number that matched the previous record high, set in 2004. In the face of this violence, though, resistance surged.

Across our region, faith communities and neighborhood groups took steps to prepare and protect each other. Inspired by the mass action of the Minneapolis community, Cincinnati schools, churches, and community groups committed themselves to learning about nonviolent practices that can make a difference. With your support, Ignite Peace offered our trainings and tools to hundreds of people in just a few months.

Our gatherings have brought together faith leaders with long histories of activism, new organizers, and others who are called to act because these times are “not normal.” Coming together across differences, people across Greater Cincinnati have borne public witness through prayer, marching, and continued community building towards our belief in a society that cares for each other.

Your support at this time allows us to continue to convene, to educate, to advocate. And this allows us to celebrate when the power of peaceful people makes a difference – when community members are released from ICE detention, when important stories from the margins are shared from pulpits and podcasts, and when civic leaders adopt policies that protect our immigrant neighbors,

Thank you for being with us.

## Criminal Justice Bills We're Watching

We are in the second year of our legislative session and lame duck will be here before we know it. Keep an eye on these bills:

- Senate Bill 134 - Abolishes the death penalty - **Support**
- House Bill 338 - Andy's Law increases punitive measures for people in prison, including getting rid of education programs, restricting outside communication, and access to visits. - **Amend**
- House Bill 548 - Requires drug and alcohol testing for police officers after use of force incidents - **Support**

**Contact your state representatives about these bills today!**

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Congregation of St. Joseph  
Sisters of Charity  
Sisters of Mercy  
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur  
Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg

### Partners:

Anawim Community  
Bellarmine Chapel  
Beloved Community Church  
Cincinnati Friends Meeting  
City Peace Church  
Comboni Missionaries  
Congregation of Divine Providence  
Dominican Sisters of Hope  
Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio  
Franciscan Sisters of the Poor  
Glenmary Home Missioners  
Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church  
Sisters of Notre Dame of Covington  
New Jerusalem Community  
St John Unitarian Universalist Church  
Ursulines of Brown County  
Ursulines of Cincinnati

### Staff:

Bekky Baker, LMSW  
*Program Director*  
Shannon Hughes  
*Executive Director*  
Samantha Searls, MSW  
*Program Director*  
Kelly Sheehy  
*Director of Development and Communications*

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# Responding to ICE Activity

By - Samantha Searls, Program Director

As we continue into year two of the Trump Administration, many of Ignite Peace's immigration justice leaders and partners have stepped back to reflect on what's been working, and what hasn't. We've learned that ICE is not following its own rules and has an unpredictable enforcement strategy. We've learned that by the time our team hears about an ICE sighting, the agents are gone. We've also learned that we are not alone - every community in the United States is trying to figure out how to slow and stop ICE.

The Immigrant Dignity Coalition's response teams have decided to make two major shifts in how we're taking action.

First, we're moving to focus on forming and supporting neighborhood-level ICE Watch teams. When ICE shows up, we need a fast, local response from individuals who live and work near the incident. ICE Watches, also known as Barrio Walks or Neighborhood Safety Teams, are popping up around the country so community members can patrol, report, and respond to ICE activity. They are figuring out what forms of communication work best for their

community, and engaging stakeholders of all kinds in keeping an eye out for their neighbors.

Second, we're reshaping our seven "rapid" response teams to be more issue- and project-focused. Groups will form and disband as needed to discuss and take action on a specific problem or idea. Right now, our network is focused on engaging municipalities/local government, raising money for affected families, canvassing businesses, mobilizing against harmful legislation, and setting up a legal dispatch system.

Want to get involved? We need you! Our response network has assembled a transportation team, a safety team, a childcare team, donated goods and gift cards, accompaniment to appointments, and more. There's something for everyone to do.



**Attend our special in-person only  
Immigrant Dignity Coalition meeting on  
April 22 to get plugged in!**

## Report ICE Abuse!

In our last newsletter, we lifted up the stories of four men: Armando, Alonzo, Ayman, and Emerson. Of those four, three were deported - but [one was set free](#).



Imam Ayman Soliman was suddenly released after 73 days in the Butler County Jail when public scrutiny pressured the federal government to drop its case against Ayman and reinstate his asylum status. Ever since, he's used his voice to share his story and speak out against the harsh conditions of Sheriff Jones'

jail. If you or your loved one experiences racial profiling or abuse by Border Patrol, ICE, state and local law enforcement, or anyone else, call the **Ohio Immigrant Alliance Hotline at 419-777-HELP (4357) or at [hotline@ohioimmigrant.org](mailto:hotline@ohioimmigrant.org)**.

## Upcoming Events

For more events, information, and to register, visit <https://ignitepeace.org/events/>

**Anti-Death Penalty Statewide Working Group**  
Monday, May 4

**Conflict and Community: Using Nonviolence in Our Lives**  
Wednesday, May 6

**Building a Culture of Nonviolence: Why We Need Nonviolence In Our World**  
Wednesday, June 3

**Strategic Nonviolence in Movements for Change**  
Wednesday, July 1



Formerly Intercommunity  
Justice and Peace Center  
215 E 14th Street  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Nonprofit  
Organization  
US Postage  
Paid  
Cincinnati, OH  
#6207

 Help us to reduce our paper consumption.

Contact: [info@ignitepeace.org](mailto:info@ignitepeace.org) to join our e-mail list to receive this newsletter online instead.



JOIN US

## FLYING PIG 2026 - TEAM IGNITE PEACE

Ignite Peace is proud to be participating in the Flying Pig Marathon for our 15th year in a row! Consider joining our team, becoming a sponsor, or making a gift to one of our team members to help get us across the finish line.

<https://give.ignitepeace.org/Pig26>

