

Like all of you, I'm reeling from our new political reality. The assaults on human and civil rights are breathtaking.

At the same time, progressive groups are mobilizing strategically. Many alliances are forming and strengthening. They are neighborhood-based, city-wide, progressive Jewish, Reform, interdenominational, national, international, issue-based and constituency-based. It's tempting to yield to overwhelm and so important that we not.

Over the last few weeks, I've been exploring how to give context and focus to all of this. It's a process; there are no easy or fixed answers.

Many of you have shared your questions with me. They're the same as mine. Where should we focus? Which actions will be effective? How can we stay directed and positive, with assaults to human and civil rights on every front? How can we sustain ourselves for the long haul.

Here are some of the issues that we're exploring:

- Are there specific roles in social and economic justice for which congregations are especially suited?
- Where is the leadership among progressive organizations?
- Which are trusted news sources for breaking news and context?
- Which strategies and tactics are appropriate in which contexts?
- How can we support our allies?

When we catch the overlaps, we're tackling them. For example, rapid response networks and circles of protection around refugees, immigrants and other victims of hate crimes, are forming through neighborhoods, the Church Council, individual congregations and advocacy groups. We've become aware of this in West Seattle. Our first step to eliminate duplication is to take inventory of who is doing what and through which alliances. That will help us free up our energy for the long slog ahead.

Specifically, at KHN, here's what we're working on:

- With our partner, Alki UCC, we're exploring becoming a sanctuary congregation. We've been participating in Church Council trainings to learn the process, risks and benefits to congregations.
- With five other progressive Jewish congregations in Seattle, we're exploring how to form circles of Protection in alliance with Christian and Muslim congregations and with each other.
- We're participating in the Jewish Federation Government Affairs Working Group around legislation at the state level.
- We're participating in HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) trainings in how to respond to emerging threats to immigrants and refugees and learning how to provide support to refugees in our community.
- We're participating in a new state coalition to protect healthcare for all.
- We're providing information to congregants about how to take individual action to advocate for human and civil rights.

It would be very helpful if you could tell KHN what Tikkun Olam programming programming would support you as a pursuer of repair of the world. For example, would you be interested in Advocacy 101? How to choose social change strategies? How to create your personal path as an activist?

If you have questions, please don't hesitate to ask. Remember that, if you have a question, others will have that same question as well.

The best news is that a new generation of activists is awakening. There is room for people of all stripes, interests, bandwidth and capabilities. We welcome you as you are and as the social justice activist you wish to become.