



GOOD FAITH **READ ALONG**

***A Minnesota Pastor on
How Christians Should
Respond to ICE.***

IN THIS EPISODE OF THE GOOD FAITH PODCAST, REV. TOLLGAARD SHARES WHAT SHE IS WITNESSING ON THE GROUND IN MINNESOTA, AND HOW FOLLOWERS OF JESUS ARE RESPONDING IN FAITH AND LOVING THEIR NEIGHBORS.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MINNESOTA

In the opening minutes of the conversation, Rev. Tollgaard offers a sobering, firsthand account of life in Minnesota over the past several months. She describes a dramatic escalation of ICE presence that has fundamentally reshaped daily life for many residents.

**We have been living under what feels like occupation.
There's really no other way to describe it.
Rev. Tollgaard**

Rev. Tollgaard is careful to note: **This is not an abstract political debate. It is a lived reality affecting children, churches, schools, and entire neighborhoods.**

"There is almost no aspect of life right now that isn't touched by fear."

- ICE agents now outnumber local police three to one in Minneapolis–St. Paul
- Agents are visible in neighborhoods, gas stations, grocery stores, schools, workplaces, and church grounds
- Many agents wear masks, carry weapons, and operate in unmarked vehicles, creating confusion and fear
- People have been detained without warrants, sometimes at work or while dropping children off at school
- Detainees are often transferred out of state within four hours, making it nearly impossible to contact family or legal counsel

The effects ripple outward beyond immigrant communities.

- Worship attendance has dropped as people fear gathering publicly
- One quarter of students in a major Minnesota school district opted for virtual learning due to the ICE presence in the community
- Families—immigrant and non-immigrant alike—are living with constant anxiety

HOW CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED TO RESPOND

From this context, Rev. Tollgaard outlines a distinctly Christian response—one rooted not first in ideology, but in discipleship.

She does not frame Christian response as winning an argument or taking control of outcomes, but as showing up—truthfully, courageously, and together—for neighbors who are afraid. This kind of faithfulness is communal rather than heroic, steady rather than loud, and shaped by Scripture more than by the news cycle.

As David French has often reminded us in previous episodes, moments like this test whether we truly believe in human dignity, the rule of law, and the moral limits of power—not only when it is convenient, but when it is costly. For followers of Jesus, these commitments are not abstractions. They are lived out in how we treat the vulnerable, how we speak the truth, and how we refuse to let fear harden our hearts.

What follows are not political talking points, but practices of discipleship—ways churches and Christians in Minnesota are responding by loving their neighbors, bearing witness, and trusting that faithful presence still matters.

I can't think of another time in my life when I've seen people so visibly living out their spiritual giftedness—making meals, driving kids to school, standing as witnesses, and showing up in love of neighbor.

REV. TOLLGAARD

TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT WHAT IS HAPPENING

“We have been living under what feels like occupation. There’s really no other way to describe it”

Rev. Tollgaard begins with clarity. Faithful presence requires naming reality honestly—without exaggeration, denial, or fear-mongering.

Telling the truth is not about outrage; it is about refusing to look away.

Speak the truth to one another.
Zechariah 8:16

**Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of
darkness, but rather expose them.**
Ephesians 5:11

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR THROUGH MUTUAL AID

“We may not be able to do everything, but we can do the next right thing for the person in front of us.”

Churches across Minnesota are responding in practical, embodied ways:

- Delivering groceries to families afraid to leave home
- Driving children to school
- Helping cover rent, utilities, and basic expenses

This is not charity from a distance—it is shared life.

Love your neighbor as yourself.
Mark 12:31

**Let us not love with words or
speech but with actions and in truth.**
1 John 3:18

SHOW UP AS A FAITHFUL, VISIBLE PRESENCE

“I can’t think of another time when I’ve seen people so visibly living out their spiritual gifts.”

Christians are also showing up as witnesses:

- Participating in prayer vigils
- Attending constitutional observer trainings
- Standing nearby when ICE activity occurs
- Bearing witness so people are not alone

You are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.
1 Corinthians 12:27

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.
Matthew 5:6

DRAW COURAGE FROM THE KINGDOM OF GOD

“Ultimately, as a citizen of the Kingdom of God, that is where I find courage.”

Rev. Tollgaard is clear: her courage does not come primarily from political alignment or legal certainty, but from allegiance to Christ.

Following Jesus means standing with the vulnerable—even when it costs something.

We must obey God rather than human beings.
Acts 5:29

The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?
Psalm 27:1

ACT AS A PROTECTOR OF OUR NEIGHBORS

“We can stand where they cannot stand, and be a voice where they cannot speak.”

Christians are also responding by acting as protectors—not through force or confrontation, but through presence and accompaniment:

- **Standing nearby when neighbors are being questioned or detained**
- **Participating as constitutional observers to ensure encounters are witnessed**
- **Accompanying neighbors to work, school, or appointments when fear makes ordinary life unsafe**
- **Helping families stay connected when loved ones are detained or moved quickly**
- **Using personal privilege to reduce risk for those who are more vulnerable**

For Rev. Tollgaard, this kind of protection is a form of love of neighbor—refusing to let people face fear alone.

**Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them
from the hand of the wicked.**

Psalm 82:4

**Carry one another's burdens, and in this way you
will fulfill the law of Christ.**

Galatians 6:2

SPEAK UP AND CALL FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

“Contact your elected officials. There need to be limits, reform, and accountability.”

Faithful presence includes advocacy. Rev. Tollgaard urges Christians to use their voices:

- **To call for investigations into deaths linked to ICE activity**
- **To demand accountability and reform**
- **To protect constitutional freedoms, including worship and free speech**

**Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.
Proverbs 31:8**

**Seek justice. Defend the oppressed.
Isaiah 1:17**

Contact your elected officials and speak out and say that there needs to be limits on ICE, that we need reform, and that we need accountability for how these agents are acting—because if it doesn't stop here in Minnesota, it will continue, and it will come to your city.

REV. TOLLGAARD

PRAYERS YOU CAN LEAN INTO IN THIS MOMENT

PRAY FOR PROTECTION

- For immigrant and refugee neighbors
- For children and families living with fear
- For those detained and separated from loved ones

“Shelter us in the protection of your love.”

PRAY FOR COURAGE AND FAITHFULNESS

- For churches to show up with humility and resolve
- For Christians to resist fear without becoming hardened
- For the strength to do the next right thing

“Give us strength and resolve.”

PRAY FOR JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- For truth to come to light
- For restraint of unjust power
- For leaders to act with wisdom and conscience

“Help us be a voice for the voiceless.”

PRAY FOR LOVE OF NEIGHBOR

- That fear would not erode compassion
- That communities would remain connected
- That the Church would reflect Christ’s love clearly

“Call us to live like Christ and carry one another’s burdens.”

A FINAL PRAYER FROM REV. TOLLGAARD

Gracious and holy God,
surround us in this moment.

Shelter us in the protection of your love.

As we kneel before you now, we do so with your beloved children in our minds and in our hearts. We ask your protection not only upon us, but especially upon our immigrant and refugee neighbors—our brothers and sisters, created in the divine image of God.

Help us in this moment to be a voice for the voiceless, to stand where they cannot stand, and to call out the injustices your people are enduring.

Give us strength and resolve so that, as we face our own uncertainty, we may be united in spirit and fortified by a divine love that calls us to live like Christ—to love our neighbors and to carry one another's burdens.

Even as we await an unknown future, we trust that our future is safe in you, and that we are held in your warm embrace.

Be with all who stand this day for the love of Christ and the love of neighbor.

Protect us and keep us safe.

In your holy name,
Amen.

GOOD FAITH