



Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church member, Chris Megargee, has spent a lifetime following his call as a Christian. That journey has taken him across the country and around the world. Following the thread of his life makes it apparent that God has prepared Chris for such a time as this.

Chris began college at Duke University as an Electrical Engineering student. Feeling the need to deepen his faith life, he took a semester off to live with the Missionaries of Charity Brothers (founded by Mother Theresa), caring for Central American refugee youth in Los Angeles. That experience planted the seeds of his love for Latin America and led him to transfer his schooling to the Catholic University of America in Washington D.C. and to change his major from Engineering to Religion.

While studying in D.C., Chris learned about the injustices perpetrated by U.S.-supported regimes in Central America and about the policies which led people to flee their homes and seek safety in the U.S—like the refugees he’d served in Los Angeles. A deepening desire to put his faith in action and work for justice after college led him to move to Bolivia and study Hispanic ministry through Maryknoll School of Theology. From Bolivia he went on to El Salvador, where he saw the impact that community radio can have as a tool for social change.

His interest in community radio led to a move to Seattle, enrollment in tech school to study electronics, and then an engineering job at KOMO-TV. He spent ten years at KOMO, during which time he and his wife started and raised their family. In his work as a TV engineer, however, Chris felt like his social change work had been put on a bit of a pause.

A yearning to use his gifts for greater social impact led him to organize “An Evening Against Hate”—a community social change event to address and provide solutions to hate crimes, which took place in October 2001 in the wake of 9/11 at Seattle Center’s McCaw Hall. Working on that project reminded him of how much he felt called to a different vocation. He left behind his broadcast engineering career to embrace a new path in nonprofit fundraising. For over twenty years, he has been raising philanthropic funding for organizations serving people living on the margins, especially in Latin America and with immigrant communities locally.

While Chris loves his Catholic faith, he was uncomfortable with the lack of inclusivity in many parishes. A friend invited him to Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church and from the first day, he, his wife and their two children felt welcomed. The liturgy was surprisingly similar to what he was used to, and he loved the powerful witness of a church that was both Jesus-centered and socially progressive. They felt at home, and Chris now describes himself as a Catholic Christian worshipping in a Lutheran church.

When President Trump was elected in 2024, Chris felt called to more intense involvement with vulnerable folks. Since then, he has spent most of his time in accompaniment work with immigrant community members. He volunteers with the Jewish Coalition for Immigrant Justice, accompanying immigrants to court, to ICE check-ins, and biometrics appointments. He also interprets at monthly asylum clinics organized by Riverton Park United Methodist Church in Tukwila. Some of his most challenging and most rewarding work is with the National Day Labor Organizing Network (NDLON). With NDLON, he organized an Adopt a Corner solidarity group to support immigrant day laborers who seek employment in the parking lot of the Shoreline Home Depot. Active volunteers show up 3 days/week to build relationships with day laborers. They

provide a ministry of presence – offering a meal, encouraging folks to hire them, and making sure the laborers know their rights if ICE arrives. Tragically, eight men have been detained by ICE from that parking lot since January.

One of the biggest challenges for Chris is seeing people in power use their power to be heartbreakingly efficient with their cruelty. He finds joy in the relationships he has formed with immigrant neighbors, in being invited to walk alongside folks he would not have met otherwise, in being known as “one of the people helping us,” and in how God is using him to love God’s people. He finds solace in Mother Theresa’s words, “God does not ask me to be successful, but to be faithful.

Recognizing that not everyone can set their job aside and volunteer full time, Chris suggests we all find one thing we CAN do – hire a day laborer, or donate, or translate, and most importantly show up with kindness and love.

To give people a concrete way to help, Chris recently launched the FIRE Campaign: Fueling Immigrant & Refugee Empowerment. FIRE is an emergency fundraising initiative to meet the critical needs of immigrant neighbors by fueling the work of eight frontline immigrant-serving organizations across Washington state. Funds raised by FIRE are unrestricted and distributed equally among the eight organizations. You can learn more about FIRE at firecampaign.org.

Joyfully,

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