

MEDIA ALERT / FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A church in the shadow of McCormick Place takes a stand for peace and civil liberties

Chicago – Rev. Errol Narain and the congregation of Trinity Episcopal Church are extending open arms to protestors who will be marching against NATO this month.

The church, located at 125 E. 26th Street, is the closest congregation to McCormick Place – literally in the shadow of the NATO summit.

Trinity Episcopal has invited protestors arriving from outside Chicago to camp on their lawn during the weekend of May 19th – 21st. One group of cyclists that will be arriving from Madison, Wisconsin, on Friday evening, the 19th, will be the first group to take them up on the offer.

<http://www.grassroutescaravan.org/>

To prepare the neighbors for the sight of protestors sleeping in tents on the lawn of the church, the congregation will co-host a Town Hall meeting with the Coalition Against NATO/G8 War and Poverty Agenda (CANG8) Thursday, May 3rd, from 7 – 9 pm.

Newland Smith, organizer for CANG8's Interfaith Committee, and an Episcopalian activist, said, "The stand taken by Rev. Narain and the leadership at Trinity is an inspiration. This is the response to the expression of First Amendment rights we would expect of our elected representatives, instead of threats to re-open Joliet Prison."

Speakers at the Town Hall will include: Fr. Bob Bossie, 8th Day Center for Justice; Mary Dean, Voices for Creative Non-Violence, who spent part of last year in Afghanistan; Margaret Jackson, American Friends Service Committee; Rabbi Brant Rosen, Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation in Evanston. National Nurses United and the Iraq Veterans Against the War will also have spokespersons present.

Joe Iosbaker of CANG8 praised the congregation. "More and more people are turning against the war in Afghanistan, and will march in their thousands and tens of thousands to bring an end to it. We expect more churches will follow the lead of Trinity Episcopal."

Parishioners at Trinity, together with members of CANG8, are canvassing the homes around the church to inform neighbors of the event on May 3rd, as well as the churches' plans to host protestors in their lawn.

“Of course the campers will respect the neighborhood, and we want to assure those who live around here of that,” remarked Rev. Narain. “We also want to engage in a dialogue about the nature of NATO and Trinity’s support for freedom of assembly.”

The camping protestors have agreed to guidelines, among them no drugs or alcohol, and no loud noise.