


'We remember you': Leger Fernández and New Mexico faith leaders lead vigil against ICE

BY: DANIELLE PROKOP - JANUARY 30, 2026 9:54 AM



 Jen Black and daughter Brooke Black, 5, sing 'We Shall Overcome' during a Jan. 29, 2026 candlelight vigil to honor people killed by federal immigration officials. (Danielle Prokop/Source NM)

Santa Fe faith leaders Thursday evening during a candlelight vigil urged compassion and continued peaceful protest against federal immigration actions.

More than 100 people attended the vigil hosted by U.S. Rep. Teresa Leger Fernández (D-New Mexico) and Catholic, Presbyterian, Jewish and Buddhist leaders.

Prayers and reflections centered on the [killing of 37-year-old Alex Pretti](#) by federal immigration agents in Minnesota – the [second such fatal incident](#) in Minnesota, along with a spate of deaths of immigrants in custody. According to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement data reviewed by Source NM, at least [30 people died in ICE custody](#) last year– [more than the last four years combined](#).

In the candlelight, as the names of the dead were read out, the congregation intoned: “We remember you and honor your life.”



Archbishop John Wester, Rep. Teresa Leger Fernández (D-N.M.) and Rev. Andrew Black of First Presbyterian Church of Santa Fe called for comprehensive immigration reform and a repudiation of the Trump Administration's violence at the Jan. 29, 2026, vigil. (Danielle Prokop/Source NM)

Fernández, whose district spans the northern portion of the state and runs alongside its eastern edge, opened Thursday's vigil saying she felt called to condemn the ICE's recent "brutality."

"What do we do in this moment, when it feels like they're winning – when it feels like the darkness keeps winning? My response: Live the Constitution, live the First Amendment," Leger Fernández said from the pulpit of the First Presbyterian church in downtown Santa Fe.

She continued: "Freedom of religion finds us here tonight, rooting our resistance in prayer, blessings, in the foundation of all traditions: love. Engage in the freedom of assembly, of peaceful protest and of the press, so that the world will know that we stand with our immigrant communities, and we will stand for our democracy."

Leger Fernández recently joined the rest of the New Mexico delegation in voting against funds for the Department of Homeland Security, and she repeated her call for the White House to remove DHS Secretary Kristi Noem in an interview with Source NM.

"They need to actually take action against everyone responsible," she told Source NM, saying that would include the removal of Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller.

Faith leaders from different creeds quoted civil rights icons, such as Martin Luther King Jr. and late Georgia Democratic Sen. John Lewis; passages from the Bible about "loving your

neighbor”; and citing the example of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German Lutheran pastor who was executed as an anti-Nazi dissident.

“I pray tonight that we go forth from our vigil determined more than ever to stand up and to speak up in this critical time in our country’s history, and we do this when we treat each other with justice and compassion,” said Rev. John Wester, the Catholic Archbishop of Santa Fe.



Michael Prieur and Rachel Kesler attended the Jan. 29, 2026, candlelight vigil. (Danielle Prokop/Source NM)

Rachel Kesler, a Santa Fe teacher, attended the vigil saying she was looking to engage with the community and determine how she could get involved.

“It’s been tricky to talk about this in the classroom setting, and I just think there’s something to be said about doomscrolling and a sense of hopelessness, so a large part of this is looking to make meaning but also turn that into action,” she said.

Michael Prieur, a retired veteran who served in the U.S. Air Force for 12 years, told Source NM he was disheartened by the immigration crackdowns.

“It’s very sad, it’s very frustrating, as someone who’s given so much for this country,” Prieur said.