

**For Immediate Release
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<p>Faith Leaders Condemn Raid on Occupy Wall Street: Demand Mayor Respect Right To Peaceful Protest</p>
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New York, NY – Faith leaders across New York reacted in shock to the mayor’s decision to dismantle the protest encampment at Zuccotti Park. In immediate response to the raid, Washington Square’s Judson Memorial Church opened its doors to approximately 80 protesters who had nowhere to turn having their homes dismantled in the middle of the night.

Judson’s Senior Minister Donna Schaper declared: “Our sanctuaries are more than just physical places for the faithful to worship. Our sanctuaries are holy places that guarantee compassion, protection and the love of God. The non-violent Occupy movement needs to be both protected and expanded.”

Rabbi Jill Jacobs of Rabbis for Human Rights-North America added: “My own tradition—the Jewish tradition—has at its core a narrative of liberation in pursuit of a more just and equitable world. This heritage compels us to support non-violent movements that seek these same goals of justice and equality.”

Rev Omar Almonte, Central Baptist Church, Bushwick added: "The occupy encampment was a symbol of the economic inequality that currently confronts our community. They were peaceful protesters willing to negotiate and be flexible with the authorities. The surprise raid and clearance of the park is a disgrace that violates the spirit of the movement and of the transparency it asks for. Instead of removing the protesters from the park the Mayor should focus on removing the concerns that created the occupation in the first place; economic injustice, poverty wage jobs, and an ever constricting budget."

Faith leaders committed to continue to build with Occupy Wall Street and support it spiritually by joining Thursday’s non-violent protest.