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A New Documentary Film That Takes Audiences Inside a Sanctuary Church Premiers at New York Latino Film Festival on September 18

August 30, 2021- A new documentary film, [*A Shelter for Edith*](#), uses rare footage to take audiences on a journey alongside Edith Espinal, a woman facing deportation who is trying to keep her family together by living inside a sanctuary church in Columbus, Ohio.

After years of searching for a pathway to legal status, the Trump administration's new deportation policies put Edith at risk of being forced to leave her family and the country she called home for more than 20 years. With no options left, Edith took refuge in Columbus Mennonite Church with the hope that immigration officials would not arrest her while she remained inside.

While the world grappled with pandemic isolation, Edith was living through an isolation of her own that lasted for more than three years. *A Shelter for Edith* sheds light on the solitary life of one undocumented woman and the threat that sent her indoors--not the pandemic, but the fear that the US immigration system could tear her family apart.

Noonday Films, a production company with ties to the sanctuary movement and immigration activism in Columbus, directed and produced the film. Filmmakers Elisa and Matthew Leahy follow her story as she struggles with the United States' broken immigration system to find a path to legal status--before it's too late.

Elisa Stone Leahy, director of *A Shelter for Edith*, described her experience making the film. "I first met Edith when she took sanctuary in our church in 2017. She has since become a close friend. As part of her advocacy team I have had the honor of learning from her steadfast commitment to justice, her passion for change and her unending strength in the face of a powerful and unjust system."

Elisa can be reached for comment at noondayfilms@gmail.com.

A Shelter for Edith premieres on September 18 at the [New York Latino Film Festival](#). [More information about the film can be found here](#).