

Dear people of God in The Episcopal Church:

I am writing to you from Geneva, where I am meeting with global partners at the World Council of Churches and the United Nations Refugee Agency. As we have discussed how our institutions might act faithfully and boldly in these turbulent times, I have been reflecting on how we Episcopalians can respond to what is unfolding around us as followers of the Risen Christ whose first allegiance is to the kingdom of God, not to any nation or political party.

The events of the last several days lend urgency to this spiritual challenge. Earlier this week, President Trump's executive order banning or restricting travel from 19 countries went into effect. This order impacts countries that are home to dioceses of The Episcopal Church and many of our Anglican Communion partners, and [I have written to the bishops and primates in those countries](#) to express our concern.

The unwarranted deployment of the National Guard and U.S. Marine Corps on the streets of Los Angeles also signals a dangerous turn. As [the bishops of California have written](#), these military deployments risk escalating the confrontations unnecessarily and set a dangerous precedent for future deployments that heighten tensions rather than resolve them. As Christians committed to strive for justice and peace among all people, we know that there is a better way.

What we are witnessing is the kind of distortion that arises when institutions like the military and the State Department are turned on the people they were meant to protect. These mainstays of the federal government, designed to safeguard civil society and promote peace and stability, are now being weaponized for political advantage.

The violence on television is not our only risk. We are also seeing federal budget proposals that would shift resources from the poor to the wealthy; due process being denied to immigrants; and the defunding of essential public health, social service, and foreign aid programs that have long fulfilled the Gospel mandate to care for the vulnerable, children, and those who are hungry and sick.

With all of this in mind, we are finding ways to respond as Christians to what we see happening around us. We are exploring options to support litigation challenging the travel ban on the ground of religious freedom; [advocating](#) for federal spending that safeguards the welfare of the most vulnerable; [caring for immigrants and refugees](#) in our congregations and communities; and [standing in solidarity with other faith groups](#). In short, we are practicing institutional resistance rooted not in partisan allegiance, but in Christian conviction.

At its best, our church is capable of moral clarity and resolute commitment to justice. I believe we can bring those strengths to bear on this gathering storm. Churches like ours, protected by the First Amendment and practiced in galvanizing people of goodwill, may be some of the last institutions capable of resisting the injustice now being promulgated. That is not a role we sought—but it is one we are called to.

In Geneva, I have been reminded that we are part of a global communion of hope in the Risen Christ. We do not stand alone as we live by our baptismal promises: to persevere in resisting evil, to strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of every human being. In these troubling times, may we find courage and resilience in our identity as members of the Body of Christ.

Yours in Christ,

The Most Rev. Sean Rowe  
Presiding Bishop  
The Episcopal Church