



From the Bishop

Dear People of God,

Included with this Newsletter is a link to the [Presiding Bishop's statement](#) about maintaining hope in our time, particularly in relation to events unfolding in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I commend it for your prayerful reflection.

I am resistant to the notion that our time is worse or more difficult than any other time. I think every period has its difficulties, as ours certainly does. But determining which period is worst – or best – is more a reflection of our collective anxieties than anything else. Certainly those who lived through the World Wars or the Depression or Vietnam might have had such thoughts. And we know from our reading of Scripture that Jesus' time had its own difficulties.

The truth is that, in every period, those who follow Jesus have to address the realities of the world they live in. They have to claim him as their Savior, and they have to respond to his teachings. Those teachings are clear: love God, love your neighbor, care for the weak, the poor, the sick, and the stranger, love your enemies, make peace. The statement from the Presiding Bishop is a call to follow Jesus now in our context and in whatever ways we can. And it's a call to hold on to hope, no matter what.

Not all of us will agree with Presiding Bishop Rowe. Some will think he's hyperventilating. Some will think he's not doing enough.

That's ok. There's plenty of room for different opinions. But none of us can escape asking what Jesus would have us do. We are all pledged to follow Jesus above all else.

I also know that the same confrontations occurring in Minnesota and elsewhere may eventually come to New York State. I pray that does not happen. Whatever happens, Christ's call to us remains, and we will strive to be faithful. I encourage conversations and prayer in your congregations about what God requires, with a willingness to listen and a heart full of compassion for those who differ.

+Steve