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Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts



February 23, 2026

Beloved of God,

As I travel around the diocese worshipping and meeting with members of our diocesan community, I continue to hear questions from people about how to respond faithfully to this time of mendacity, state-sanctioned violence, and the erosion of democracy in our country.

The Gospel calls Christians to follow the example of Jesus, who taught us to love each other, to choose peace over violence, to welcome the stranger, and to confront injustice directly. Jesus also calls us to protect those who suffer, who are vulnerable, and who are afraid. As a diocese, we answer this Christian call by living into our shared values, especially those of courage, justice, and welcome.

In this season of growing uncertainty and fear, those values call us to action. We are a diverse diocese, so what that action looks like will be different for each of us.

From my location as your bishop, I feel called to act in deep solidarity with those who are facing profound threat and risk to their livelihoods, well-being, and safety – especially those within our diocesan family. Many of you may feel similarly called.

Others of you are living with deep fear as part of your daily lives, facing these challenges head-on, and inspiring us all with your courage. Notably, there are many in our diocesan community for whom such fear is not new, because injustice and discrimination have been with us for a long, long time.

However you are facing this moment, you are a part of a beloved and loving Episcopal community, and you have a unique God-given light to shine. I invite and encourage each of you to discern how you might be called to share that light.

I admit that the needs are so great and seemingly changing so quickly, it can be challenging to know where to go for help when you need it, and how you can be helpful to others.

Fortunately, we have tremendous wisdom and experience within our diocese. I am especially grateful to the Rev'd Canon Jean Baptiste Ntagengwa, Canon for Immigration & Multicultural Ministries, who has continued to provide pastoral care to immigrant clergy and is helping us support immigrants in our diocesan community. Please reach out to him with questions or with requests for help at jbntagengwa@diomass.org.

I also want to highlight Episcopal City Mission, which is a leader in engaging Episcopalians throughout Massachusetts in immigrant justice and connecting us with other community-based organizations and interfaith groups doing justice work. If you are interested in connecting with ECM, I invite you to join their Emergent Action Network through [this link](#). For parishes and individuals committed to doing more for immigrant justice, fill out [ECM's form](#) with the ways you'd like to get involved.

As a diocese, we are organizing our collective efforts around four main lanes of effort: **Provide, Public Witness, Protect, and Pray.**

The following are actions to consider as you discern how you are called in this time. These are by no means the only options available. However, my hope is that this framework can aid in your discernment.

Many thanks to Rev'd Canon Chris Wendell, Rev'd Canon Clayton McCleskey, and Rev'd Canon Jean Baptiste Ntagengwa, who are leading a coordinated and strategic approach in my office. Additionally, I am grateful to Rev'd Arrington Chambliss, Rev'd Edwin Johnson, and Hannah Hafter from ECM as well as Rev'd Liz Steinhauser for their faithful leadership and collaboration as we all discern what is ours to do.

Admittedly, this work is not new to the many of you who have already mobilized in powerfully effective ways, both with fellow Episcopalians and with secular and ecumenical partners like those at the Massachusetts Council of Churches. I encourage us all to embrace opportunities to deepen relationships with a wide array of partners across our communities. We are stronger together, following the leadership of communities most impacted and knowledgeable.

No matter your experience, all of us are being challenged. We are bound together as the Body of Christ, members one of another, called to love our neighbors as ourselves. Let us continue to engage this moment with deep mutual care as we courageously carry Christ's love into a world that hungers for God's justice.

With hope,



The Right Reverend Julia E. Whitworth
Bishop Diocesan

[Click here to find these resources on the diocesan website](#)

Provide

- **Serve as a Supply Hub:** The LUCE Immigrant Justice Network is seeking congregations that would like to become “supply hubs” that help with printing as well as putting together hundreds of “Know Your Rights” keychains in many languages. If you are interested, please fill out the [ECM interest form](#). To learn more, you can also reach out to Amy Torres Best, amyjtorres@gmail.com, who, with the Church of Our Savior in Arlington, has been leading the way on this.
- **Contribute to the Immigrant Legal Emergency Fund:** To provide for those connected to our worshipping communities who are at risk, together we have launched the Immigrant Legal Emergency Fund, which has provided over \$100,000 in urgent legal and livelihood assistance to members of our diocesan community. The needs only continue to grow while the fund is running very low. Please consider contributing to the Fund by [clicking here](#) to give.
- **Access the Immigrant Legal Emergency Fund:** If you are facing a particular need, I encourage you to speak to your clergy, who are able to make requests for support from the fund. Clergy can [reach out to Canon Jean Baptiste](#) with questions.

Public Witness

- **Advocate and Act:** On behalf of our denomination, the Episcopal Church’s Office of Government Relations offers a wide range of resources and tools, ranging from prayer to policy updates to mobilizing outreach to lawmakers. You can learn more – and sign up for the Action Alerts [here](#). Know that Canon Clayton is also building out our own diocesan relationships with state and local lawmakers so that we can increase our public witness.
- Get involved with the **Massachusetts Episcopal Network for Justice and Joy**. Find out more [here](#).

- **Protest Peacefully:** Some of us are called to visible, public witness through peaceful, prayerful protest and acts of public witness. Peaceful demonstrations, grounded in love of neighbor and mutual care, are not only key to democracy, they can also be central to Christian witness. If you are called to protest, I encourage you to check out the Episcopal Church's [Protesting Faithfully Toolkit](#).
- **Bear Witness at ICE Burlington Field Office:** Each Wednesday, there is a "Bearing Witness" interfaith standout from 11 am - 1 pm at the ICE Office at 1000 District Ave in Burlington, MA, both as a protest and a message of support to people arriving for immigration appointments. You can read more [here](#).
- **Prep and Pray, No Kings Rally, March 28th:** We invite you to join as a community of all faiths for a "Prep and Pray" event before the No Kings Action in Boston Common on March 28th. We'll gather at the Cathedral of St Paul at 138 Tremont, across from the Park St T Station, an hour before the rally (time TBD) to sing together, center in prayer, and build community to be ready for what's next. This is a collaboration with the Massachusetts Council of Churches, Episcopal City Mission, and our Cathedral Church of St. Paul. You can [register here](#).

Protect

- **ICE Protocols for Churches:** I strongly encourage worshipping communities, especially those at a higher risk, to thoughtfully prepare for the presence of federal agents in your congregations. I commend the resources created by the Episcopal City Mission, available [here](#).
- **ICE Watch and Hotline:**
If you see ICE agents: I have heard from many in our diocesan community who are worried about what to do if they see or encounter ICE agents. You can be prepared by keeping the LUCE ICEWatch hotline number saved in your phone (617-370-5023) and by watching and sharing [this 4-minute video](#) that explains how to document ICE activity calmly and safely.

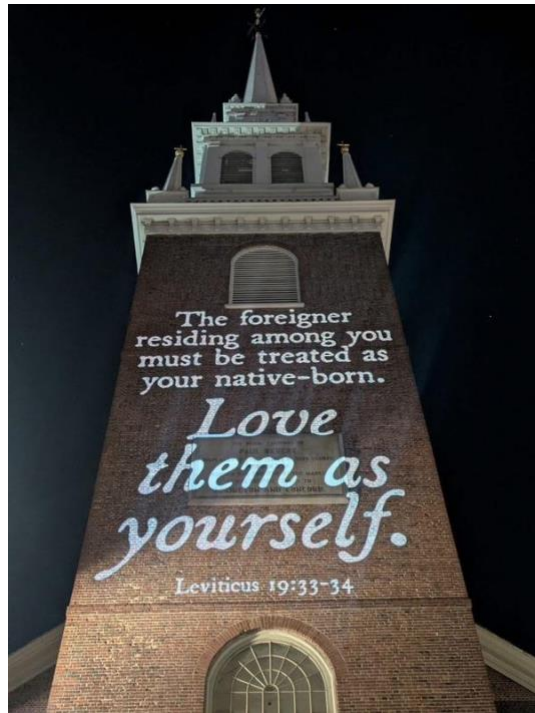
If you feel called to help protect those at risk, consider volunteering for the LUCE Immigrant Justice Network of Massachusetts' [ICE Watch and Hotline](#).
- **Form a Safety Team:** There is a growing need for volunteers to serve as part of trained safety teams to help at churches and programs that are at particular risk to ICE. ECM is organizing trainings, so if you have a group of at least four at your parish that would like to be trained to serve as a safety team, please fill out the [ECM interest form](#).

- **Volunteer Legal Aid:** ECM also has a volunteer program for active or retired attorneys who do not practice immigration law but want to volunteer to help with asylum and deportation defense cases. Lawyers will be trained and paired with a “first chair” in charge of each case through the [De Novo Center for Justice and Healing](#). More info [here](#) (scroll to the bottom), and if interested email hannah@ecmteam.us.
- **Learn more about TPS:** Immigrants with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) are one vulnerable community that is organizing for their own rights and protection. 45,000 Haitian TPS-holders were at risk of losing their status and becoming deportable on Tuesday, February 3, before a judge issued a reprieve at the last minute. Their future is still in limbo, like TPS holders from many other countries such as Nepal, Honduras, and El Salvador. ECM is partnering with the MA TPS Committee to hold screenings of their new documentary [The Next Dream](#) at churches. If you would like to host a screening including a conversation with the director and a TPS Committee leader, please contact hannah@ecmteam.us.

Please note: Given reports that ICE is tracking those who protest in the hopes of being led to vulnerable people, we strongly encourage those who protest or observe ICE operations to not directly engage with those at risk, increasing their vulnerability.

Pray

- **Personal Prayer:** We are all called to pray, and prayer takes many forms. I encourage you to offer your own personal prayers, which might mean opening the hymnal to your favorite hymn, praying the Daily Office, or using resources such as this [Litany for Social Justice](#).
- **Go to Church:** As Episcopalians, we are a people of common prayer and common worship, so I also encourage you to go to worship. Gathering as the assembly of God to proclaim the Word and share Holy Communion is in itself an act of resistance against forces that would divide and dehumanize.
- **Serve as Chaplain:** The MA Council of Churches has put out a volunteer request for ordained clergy and certified lay chaplains to join a new chaplaincy to provide pastoral presence of prayer, support, and accompaniment for those attending appointments at the Burlington ICE Office. Volunteer shifts will be in pairs, on weekdays from 8-11:30 am. For more information, please contact the Reverend Dave Woessner at dave@masscouncilofchurches.org.
- **Attend upcoming spiritual retreat:** ECM is organizing Sustainable Compassion in Times of Challenge, a spiritual retreat for Christian activists, ministers, and service providers on April 18 from 10am to 3pm at St Paul’s, Brookline. Please contact hannah@ecmteam.us if you are interested.



138 Tremont Street Boston, Massachusetts 02111 • 617-482-5800 • www.diomass.org



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