

Statement on Protests

January 13, 2021

Dear People of God:

Earlier this week, the FBI warned that armed protests are being planned for Washington D.C. and all 50 state capitals sometime between Saturday, January 16, and the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden on January 20. As your bishops, we write today imploring you to stay away from these protests and any counter-protests that might occur.

In these perilous times, when public demonstrations carry significant risk of both violence and exposure to COVID-19, we believe that God calls us to exercise both our Christian witness and our civic responsibility in ways that promote peace and safety. Between now and Inauguration Day, we can best follow our vocation to be peacemakers by staying away from places where harm could come to God's people.

Staying home does not, however, mean staying silent. We hope that all people of goodwill will join us in raising our voices to support our country's democracy, letting our elected officials know that we are praying for them, particularly in the aftermath of last week's siege of the U.S. Capitol. Whether you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, or an independent, please let your elected officials know that you cherish our representative democracy and our pursuit of a more perfect union, and that you expect that those who are found responsible for last week's violence to be held accountable. The Episcopal Church has a robust witness in Washington D.C., and the Episcopal Public Policy Network provides all of us with opportunities to advocate for peace, justice and the dignity of every human being. You can join the network online [LINK to <https://episcopalchurch.org/OGR/eppn-sign-up>].

Most of all, in the coming days, we ask you to pray. This collect from the Book of Common Prayer holds particular meaning as we seek to face the days ahead with courage, wisdom, and grace:

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart, and especially the hearts of the people of this land, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Faithfully,

The Rt. Rev. Matt Gunter, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Fond du Lac and Bishop Provisional,
Diocese of Eau Claire

The Rt. Rev. Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis

The Rt. Rev. Mark Hollingsworth, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Ohio

The Rt. Rev. Deon Johnson, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Missouri

The Rt. Rev. Shannon MacVean-Brown, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Vermont

The Rt. Rev. Kevin D. Nichols, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Bonnie Perry, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Michigan

The Rt. Rev. William D. Persell, Assisting Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Ohio

The Rt. Rev. Ken Price, Bishop in the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio

The Rt. Rev. Rayford Ray, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan

The Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe, Bishop, Episcopal Dioceses of Western New York and Northwestern Pennsylvania

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Douglas E. Sparks, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Northern Indiana

The Rt. Rev. Arthur B. Williams, Jr., Assisting Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Ohio

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Audrey Scanlan, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania