



The Episcopal Church in Delaware

The Rt. Rev. Kevin S. Brown, Bishop

all things in love

1 Cor. 16:14

Epiphany, Light, and the Timeless Gift of Dr. King

January 15, 2026

Beloved in Christ,

We again walk in the season after the Epiphany, a time each year when our focus returns to the abundant ways the good news of Jesus Christ – the light of Christ – is revealed in the world. And yet, though we Christians firmly proclaim with St. John that *the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it* (John 1:5), it can sometimes feel as though the darkness is gaining the upper hand.

Across our communities, in Delaware and beyond, people are hurting. Fear is real. I am particularly mindful of the pain, fear, and trauma being harshly – at times even cruelly – directed at immigrant communities in the name of enforcement. Lives are being callously uprooted, dignity is being denied, and wrongs are being committed in the guise of justice that demeans the image of God in us all. This so-called enforcement has in too many cases strayed far from its stated purpose of making this country safer and has instead inflicted disproportionate harm and lasting injury. When communities live in fear and human dignity is dismissed, the Body of Christ is wounded.

I ask this diocese to join me, now and each day, in prayer. Remember those who feel unseen, unheard, or expendable, that they may know they are loved and not alone. Remember those who carry the burden of government, that they may exercise their responsibilities with mercy and compassion. Pray for us all, that we may find the clarity to discern how God is calling us to live and the courage to do his good will.

The light of Christ has, time and time again, been revealed not in power or domination, but in humility, vulnerability, and love. Let there be no mistake: in the midst of a hurting world, in our politics and in our lives, we bear the light of Christ not by turning to violence or intimidation, but by choosing the way of our crucified Lord. As our Lord tells us, “Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword” (Mt. 26:52). Obedience to Jesus means refusing to dehumanize others, even when fearfulness and division tempt us to do so.

I am grateful once again, and particularly in this challenging moment, for the timeless leadership and wisdom of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Over sixty years ago, Dr. King powerfully wrote in his book, *Strength to Love*, “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction.” Beloved, it is beyond foolish to think that using violent or cruel approaches to achieve immigration enforcement, law enforcement, or any other political goal will lead to anything resembling justice. Such approaches only spark the descending spiral of destruction Dr. King warned us of in 1963.

Beloved, these are heavy days. Division runs deep, and the wounds are many. Yet we are not without hope. Destruction is neither inevitable nor necessary. Jesus Christ is still the Light of the world, and he calls us to follow him — not in fear, but in faith; not in violence, but in love; not in despair, but in hope.

Faithful, nonviolent witness is a powerful expression of the gospel. I encourage you to speak the truth in love, to advocate for the vulnerable, to support ministries of accompaniment and mercy, to contact elected leaders, to participate in peaceful public witness, and to create spaces where stories can be shared and human dignity honored.

May God strengthen us to be a diocese rooted in prayer, bold in compassion, and steadfast in the way of Jesus — following the witness of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., whose life and witness we celebrate on Monday. He taught us that love is stronger than fear and that justice, pursued without violence, is the work of faithful discipleship. May the light of Christ guide our steps toward healing, justice, and peace.

In Christ,

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