

Statement by the Rev. Anne Derse on the Floor Resolution
“Dignity, Not Hate, Not Mass Deportation, Not Silence”
Episcopal Diocese of Washington, Annual Convention
January 31, 2026

My name is the Rev. Anne Derse, I am the Deacon at St. John’s Norwood in Bethesda-Chevy Chase. Our parish has supported immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers for many years. It is because these beloved new neighbors and children of God are under unjust assault today that I speak in strong support of the Resolution advocating “Dignity, Not Hate, Not Mass deportation, Not Silence.”

Friends, we all know that for over three decades the federal government, on both sides of the aisle, has dramatically failed in its duty to legislate and implement an effective and just immigration policy and process—one that regulates immigration, as it is the government’s responsibility to do, but also one that upholds our national values of compassionate welcome, respect for human dignity and human rights, and respect for due process and the rule of law, including accountability.

The latest horrific iteration of this governmental failure is the violent immigration enforcement campaign now being waged in Minnesota and nationwide. This inhumane campaign violates our values and is taking a devastating toll on our neighbors, our rights, and on our very souls.

And it is precisely because the secular authorities have failed in their duty to effectively and justly regulate immigration, with such brutal consequences for us and for our siblings in God’s one human family, that we in the Diocese of Washington must stand up and courageously say “no!” to the system and “yes!” to dignity for everyone—as did 154 bishops of the Episcopal Church, including our own, in their powerful letter of January 28. I commend it to you, and thank you, Bishop Budde and Bishop Sutton.

I applaud this resolution’s urgent call that we as members of this Diocese EDUCATE ourselves thoroughly on the issues at stake, which have life or death consequences for so many; OPPOSE the current flawed immigration system and its unjust implementation; and ADVOCATE unceasingly until the government legislates and implements a just and compassionate immigration system, respecting our

values—ensuring welcome, protection and integration of the stranger, as the Scriptures command us to do.

Finally, we answer to a power that eclipses any secular authority, and when a neighbor stands before us, naked, hungry, vulnerable, persecuted or in fear, and when a system stands before us that is complicit in oppression, our charge is clear: as followers of Jesus we will love and aid our neighbor, no questions asked, and we will fight legally, peacefully but unrelentingly until the system perpetuating injustice is changed.

Thus is the way of love.

Thank you for supporting this resolution.