

Christian Ministerium of Southern Arizona

For God so Loved the World: A Christian Witness Against Harm

In May 2025, a grassroots movement of clergy in Southern Arizona came together as an ecumenical working group—pastors, deacons, active and retired—committed to offering a clear, public Christian witness in response to a deepening national crisis. As our first collective action, we have drafted a statement addressing urgent events unfolding in our nation and world. We now invite other clergy across Southern Arizona to add their names to this statement and to consider joining this growing movement for continued witness and action rooted in the way of Jesus.

As faith leaders representing a spectrum of Christian traditions, we write with an urgent call to Christians to speak out for the way of Jesus and against devastation being done to our neighbors and planet. As faith leaders, we bear witness daily to the teaching of Jesus Christ—a message grounded in love and compassion that provides wisdom for humans seeking to live in respectful relationship with God's creation and one another.

Clergy have too often been complicit or silent in times of crisis. We are negligent if we remain so now. We do not speak for all Christians, nor do we represent everyone in our faith communities. We preach, lead and act in diverse ways, yet we have found a collective voice and are compelled now to speak in opposition to the harmful policies and actions we are witnessing in our nation, including by the President of the United States, the Administration, elected officials, judges, and the public, including people identifying as Christian.

Jesus' way of love leads us to see worth, dignity, and opportunity in all. Jesus repaired divisions, welcomed outsiders, and retained traditions that guide how we live together. Jesus gathered people to address injustices and harm, explicitly lifting up the poor and vulnerable, prioritizing compassion and empathy. Our nation's leaders have not often prioritized those on the margins. Since Inauguration Day of this year, we have witnessed a dizzying number of harmful policies, practices, and rhetoric. Although deceptively clothed in Christian language and symbolism, these actions invert Jesus' ministry and teachings.

We commit to a message of hope in response to the following specific actions of this current administration. These actions are daily assaults against God's beloved creation, including human decency, and especially including persons on the margins and most vulnerable. God's way of freedom, justice, and love is a path forward for all people. Instead of division, we can

work together to help workers, families, and communities thrive. Instead of scarcity, we can work together to encourage growth and flourishing for people and the planet.

“For God so loved the whole world” describes God’s dream for humanity, in contrast to the scapegoating, fear and intimidation that characterize this administration. Therefore, we denounce the following:

- people being taken, imprisoned, and deported without due process
- the criminalization of workers and children without reason
- immigration raids that bring daily fear to families and communities

“God created the world and called it good” describes God’s dream for creation. Therefore, we denounce the following:

- ecological irresponsibility that imperils God's Earth and all who inhabit it
- the use of retaliation and name-calling to suppress the freedom of expression among individuals and institutions in this country
- the inherent racism in efforts to ban books, end diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, and distort the truthful teaching of our nation's history
- the bullying and discriminatory practices aimed at LGBTQ individuals, especially children

"For the least of these" is Jesus’ vision of a world where people are free to feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick, and respect the humanity of those imprisoned (Matthew 25:31-46). Therefore, we denounce the following and more:

- cutting Medicaid and health insurance, essential to the wellbeing of millions of people
- closing our nation’s borders to people seeking haven from genuine harm; sweeping travel and visa bans that categorize people as potential threats; the efforts to unconstitutionally withhold citizenship from children born in this country
- gutting of USAID and other international humanitarian assistance; which has already resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of children worldwide
- the withholding of billions of dollars of federal funds to educational institutions which are essential for vital research

We call ourselves to account and invite others into practices of bold mercy, justice, and compassion. With our words and actions, we will work for the common good of Earth and its inhabitants. We call on our nation's leaders and community members of all faith traditions and life experiences to receive the wisdom of God's sacred teaching.

We turn toward one another seeking goodness, not greatness.

Signed,

Reverend Doctor Brad Munroe, Presbyterian Church (USA)

The Right Reverend Jennifer Reddall, Episcopal Church

Reverend Deborah Hutterer, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Reverend Doctor Jay Hartley, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Reverend Doctor Carlo Rapanut, United Methodist Church

Rev. Debora Adinolfi, Episcopal Church

Rev. Lanine Allen, Episcopal Church

Rev. Paula Barker Datsko, Episcopal Church

Rev. Franklyn Bergen, Episcopal Church

Rev. Gayle Bintliff, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Rev. Jessica Braxton, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Rev. Michael Bush, United Church of Christ

Rev. David Buss, United Church of Christ

Rev. Mateo Chavez, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Rev. John Cheek, Presbyterian Church (USA)

Rev. Kay Childs-Travis, Covenant Presbyterian Church

Rev. Peggy Christiansen, Presbyterian Church (USA)

Rev. Samantha Christopher, Episcopal Church

Rev. Allison Cornell, Episcopal Church

Rev. Gary Cyr, Episcopal Church

Rev. Tracy Daub, Presbyterian Church (USA)

Rev. Jay Deskins, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Rev. Kelley Dick, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Rev. Jeffrey Dixon, Presbyterian Church (USA)

Rev. Mary Chotard Doll, Episcopal Church

Rev. Ash Dotson, United Methodist Church

Rev. Denise Edwards, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Rev. David Fife, Presbyterian Church (USA)

Rev. Geoffrey Glaser, Episcopal Church

Rev. Dr. Lisa Graumlich, Episcopal Church
Rev. Alisa Guardiola Gonzalez, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Rev. Dorothy A. Gutwein, Episcopal Church
Rev. Alison Harrington, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Greg Hartman, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Rev. Naomi Hartman, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Rev. Canon David Benedict Hedges, Episcopal Church
Rev. Daniel A. Hodgson, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Rev. John Hoelter, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Rev. Ellie Hutchinson, The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries
Rev. Dr. Rodney Hutton, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Rev. Amy Janssen, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Rev. Meredith Joubert, United Methodist Church
Rev. John D. Kautz, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Rev. Steve Keplinger, Episcopal Church
Rev. Dr. John Leech, Episcopal Church
Rev. Wyatt Linde, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Rev. Elizabeth Lyman, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Karen MacDonald, United Church of Christ
Rev. Dr. Richard Mallory, Episcopal Church
Rev. Frederick J. Masterman, Episcopal Church
Rev. Canon Katlin McCallister, Episcopal Church
Rev. Stewart McDonald, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Rev. Dominic Moore, Episcopal Church
Rev. Laura Munroe, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Tony Ontanyonm United Methodist Church
Rev. David Pavesic, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Rev. Christine Petersen-Snyder, Episcopal Church
Rev. Dr. George Pike, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Beth Rambikur, Episcopal Church
Rev. Gerald Richard, African Methodist Episcopal
Rev. Ron Rude, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Rev. Canon Joanna Satorius, Episcopal Church
Tina Schlabach, Mennonite Church USA
Lisa Showalter, Mennonite Church USA
Rev. Bart Smith, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Elizabeth Smith, Presbyterian Church (USA)

Rev. Stephen Springer, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Rev. Rachel Srubas, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Alexander Swain, Episcopal Church
Rev. Susan Swanson, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Rev. Timothy Swanson, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Rev. Drew Terry, United Church of Christ
Rev. Judith Turberg, Episcopal Church
Rev. Amalia Vagts, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Deacon Wendi VanBeek, Evangelical Lutheran Church in American
Elder Margot Walker, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Shirley Wells, United Methodist Church
Reverend Doctor Brooke Wilkerson, United Methodist Church
Reverend Michael Wilkerson, United Methodist Church
Reverend Carla Williams, Presbyterian Church (USA)

Will you commit to reading this letter during your worship service on Sunday, August 17, 2025, as a sign of solidarity with ecumenical partners across the region? (Participation in this shared action is not required in order to sign the letter—we are simply hoping to know who plans to take part on that day.)