

## **SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM PASTOR BILL** (January 9, 2021)

The terrible, life-destroying insurrection and violent attacks on our U.S. Capitol took place last Wednesday after I had recorded the sermon and elements for our worship service this Sunday. The message of remembering and celebrating the Baptism of our Lord and our own baptisms is still critically important for our lives.

Yet, in light of what happened in Washington, D.C. on January 6, we must be reminded, more than ever, that as baptized Christians, we are called to let our light shine before others, especially at a time like this—a light that shows the love of God and love of our fellow human beings, our fellow neighbors, our fellow American sisters and brothers.

What we saw on January 6, and the divisive actions and words that preceded the event, was the exact opposite of what we as Christians are called to do. We are called to:

- Live by the truth, not by lies.
- Express our views in peaceful ways, not by violence.
- Act according to the words of Jesus, not by the rhetoric of hate and division.
- Teach ourselves and our young people that our country is made special by democratic and civic engagement, not by unrelenting bias.
- Embrace our rich and growing racial, ethnic, and religious diversity, not fear it.

Please say this prayer with me: “Dear Lord, you have taught us to love one another. We pray for our country at this difficult time. Lead us in our calling as baptized Christians to build relationships through open hearts and hospitality, to learn from and listen to each other, to always seek the truth and to tell the truth, to reach out to those in need, to pray for each other, and to pray with profound hope for a nation that will be increasingly filled with caring people actively pursuing the common good. May the peace of Christ be with us all. In the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ we pray.”