

## **A Message From Pastor Yvi**

January 6, 2021

Today has been a tumultuous day in our nation. Like many of you, I found myself in the midst of a workday, trying to do one too many things as usual, when texts and notifications began to pop up on my phone and computer about events unfolding in Washington, D.C. For the better part of the afternoon, I paid closer attention, wavering between disbelief, horror and numbness as lawmakers and civil servants evacuated their seats and chambers in fear for their lives, and the National Guard was deployed to assist and protect. No one living in the United States has ever seen such a visible and violent attack on democracy in our nation's capital, incited by its leaders. It is frightening when we think about the implications for our way of life and governance, which each of us – regardless of partisanship – holds dear.

But around the core of what transpired today, I feel deep sadness. Sadness that the frenzy of our national rhetoric has guided us toward violence and away from peace.

“Blessed are the peacemakers,” Jesus said, “for they will be called children of God.”

There are *peacekeepers* in Washington, and in other places across our country tonight. And I pray for them. I pray for their safety, their capacity to deescalate. I am grateful for their service and courage to put their bodies on the line for the sake of freedom and for others. I pray for those they protect from harm, inflicted by others or self-inflicted.

But peacekeepers are not peacemakers. Peacekeepers try to restore calm and safety in situations where violence is already occurring. Peacemakers are different kinds of people. Peacemakers take the long, difficult road of speaking directly with one another – holding together in the midst of disagreement because love of fellow human is stronger. Peacemakers long for an absence of violence, orient their lives around building a world where today's events would be unfathomable - impossible, even. Peacemakers desire justice, for everyone, and will speak out when harm has been done and people are oppressed. They will do so, even if it costs them a great deal.

People who make peace make space. Space for others around them. Space where all are welcome and heard and respected.

Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God.

As we pray for the peacekeepers tonight, let those of us who follow Christ commit to being peacemakers tomorrow and in the long months to come.

*Pastor Yvi Martin*