Opinion
Guest Voices



Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde delivers the sermon at a national prayer service Jan. 21, 2025, at the Washington National Cathedral with U.S. President Donald Trump, first lady Melania, U.S. Vice President JD Vance and second lady Usha Vance in attendance. (OSV News/Reuters/Kevin Lamarque)



by John Dear

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May 4, 2026

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On this week's episode of "The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast," I speak with Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde of the Washington National Cathedral. She received global attention last year during the inaugural prayer service at the National Cathedral when she called upon President Donald Trump to show "mercy" to people.

Budde is the first woman elected to lead the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, D.C., and the Washington National Cathedral. Before that, she served for 18 years as rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Minneapolis. She is the author of three books, most recently, *How We Learn to Be Brave: Decisive Moments in Life and Faith*.

"I knew for months that I would be preaching at an interfaith service," she said. "We didn't know if Trump would come. I felt two things. I had to speak the truth about the dangers of praying for unity as a country when we were as a people and our elected officials had no intention of working toward that unity. I knew, too, there were many people who were terrified and wondered if there was a place for them with his return, so I took the opportunity to remind the most powerful person in the country that he could afford to be generous and merciful."

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In January 2026, she returned to Minneapolis and spoke at rallies denouncing the ICE raids and killings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti. "There was a sense of resolve, horror, exhaustion, fear and defiance. I've never been part of anything like it."

"The gospel mandate always points us in the direction of love," Budde said. "Try to speak with dignity because that gives us more options, and protects us from gratuitous contempt and meeting hatred with hatred. When Jesus was confronted with resistance and moved into Jerusalem deliberately to take his message to political power, he never wavered from nonviolence. Not once. We are called to live out the grace and love of God revealed in Jesus. Be encouraged. Hold fast. Trust that there is more at work in the world than the evil we are witnessing. It's not all up to us, but we are needed."

Listen to the full episode here.

This story appears in the **The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast** feature series. View the full series.