

## ***Essay Question for Becoming Beloved Community Scholarships, 2025***

The Washington National Cathedral hosted an interfaith Service of Prayer for the Nation on Tuesday, January 21. In this special service, the Cathedral gathered with interfaith and ecumenical partners to offer prayers of thanksgiving for our democracy and to seek God's guidance in the years ahead.

During this service Bishop Mariann Budde preached to those gathered and addressed some of her remarks directly to the newly inaugurated President. The sermon drew enormous attention and ignited passionate debates, both of praise and criticism of her theology and over the appropriateness of her direct remarks to the President. On the following Sunday, preachers entered pulpits across the country feeling the need to prayerfully reflect on the themes and divisions that have been so lately prominent in our public life and were further ignited in the wake of Bishop Budde's sermon.

If you were to walk into a pulpit on the Sunday following the Bishop's sermon, what would you have said? What would you offer as a way that speaks to these divisions from the perspective of the Gospel? Where/how does your story and calling intersect with this moment? How do you read the times and the tensions from that perspective? In an essay of no more than 1500 words, offer your reflection. *Be mindful in your essay to respond to all the above questions.*

To read and/or to view the entire sermon by Bishop Budde, go to:

<https://cathedral.org/sermons/homily-a-service-of-prayer-for-the-nation/>