

# Call to Action and Love

## Reflection by Reverend Rebecca M. Bryan

January 27, 2026

My friends,

Here we are again. Gathering together in times of tumult, tragedy, and increasingly outrageous times. Our democracy is not what we once knew it to be, and it's getting worse, not better, by the day.

There are so many reasons to be afraid. It is easy and understandable to feel powerless and at a loss of what to do.

We're angry. I have ministerial colleagues asking if it's okay to say "fuck" in a pastoral prayer. I understand. These are unprecedented times. The reason that I call them unprecedented is because they have never been here, on this day, in this year, before. It is not enough to say, "We've been here before." Or "Other countries have been through this or have it worse." It is not enough to say these things because we need more.

We need to acknowledge that what is happening these days is horrific. The deaths of Renee Good and now Alex Pretti are gruesome, inhumane, and in direct opposition to the values of our faith and the country we believed in and love. We have not been here before. We are here now.

We need to realize that all that we thought was real and true about the United States of America is not true. Democracy is not for certain. Our laws do not protect all people, or the environment, and our courts are not unbiased.

We need to recognize that the horrors and oppressive governments that we thought only happened in other countries can happen here. They are happening here.

All of this is to say that we need honest appraisal of what is happening, and the courage to not look back, but to look forward and to be here, now, with what is happening, and doing all that we can in love.

I ask you to stop comparing not only countries and times, but each other. Let go of definitions of what it means to act. Recognize that by the very virtue of your life, you are not only living, but you are acting. Your interactions, your attitude, your

words, and your choices, whatever they may be, matter.

We will be saved, we will get through this time, when all of us realize that all our actions, attitudes, and contributions to the lives of others matter.

There are actions we can take. That too can be overwhelming. We have parishioners who are part of LUCE, the immigration justice network of Massachusetts, to receive training, to be involved with their hotline, and to report ICE incidents.

Massachusetts Community Action Network (MCAN) has a mailing list that regularly sends actions you can take, including today with an email to send to your U.S. senators urging them to vote NO on Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funding or a script to call your senator.

There are many other ways to get involved. Watch for all, choose some.

Develop relationships, real relationships. We are better in real relationships, and we are better when we are as strong as possible in body, mind, and spirit.

Getting flooded and overwhelmed is part of the tactics being used right now.

We can all care better when we are connected and as well as possible.

We can help ourselves by asking "what can we do?" rather than "what can I do?" "We" is strong; "I" is impossible.

We all need people and places, rituals, and safe spaces to process our emotions. The listening circles we are holding here are one option to do that. We have pastoral care associates you can reach out to. Let's share resources with each other about how we can care for ourselves and offer that care as a resource to our congregation and each other.

Our Unitarian Universalist faith is centered in Love. Love that is bold. Love that knows that love is what justice looks like in public. Love that lives into the fact that we are all interconnected. Love

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that thrives in diversity and grows in freedom.  
Love that shows grace, welcomes all of ourselves,  
and cares for one another.

That love, combined with collective action, is what  
we need. That love and action is what will save  
us from the despair that aspires to overwhelm us.  
That love and action is not for ourselves alone.  
For no man is an island and we cannot live for  
ourselves alone.

Amen.