



# Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

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## OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

June 24, 2018

The Hon. Donald Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I write you tonight with burning anxiety and distress. The situation confronting immigrants and refugees coming to our country has reached such a sad, confusing point that surely something must be done to calm the situation. I plead with you, as the highest elected official in the United States, to take action to reunite parents and their children and to assure the due process of law for everyone who seeks to cross our borders.

My plea comes first of all from hope for our country. All of us nearly are immigrants or descended from immigrants. The greatness of the United States has grown from the continued renewal that each new wave of immigrants has brought us. Closing our borders now, and closing them so cruelly as we seem to have done, is a betrayal of our history.

But I also write as a leader in the Christian community. Lutheran Christians like me believe that a strong government is God's loving gift to all people, believers and unbelievers alike. Strong government is essential to everyone's well-being. But government goes wrong when it deals harshly with the poor and weak. I am afraid that some of your advisors have used the Bible to confuse the government's legitimate strength with arbitrary and unpredictable power.

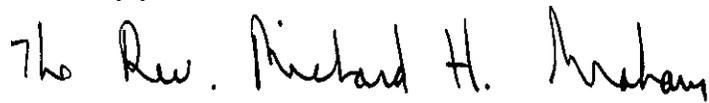
Instead, I would refer you in the Bible to the famous passage in which God says to the children of Israel, "When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God." This passage is from the book of Leviticus. God's people are being reminded here that because they were aliens, immigrants and strangers and outsiders, once themselves, they should always be just and loving with people who are in the same situation. This is the ideal we have for ourselves as God's people today. And this is the ideal we have for the diverse and beautiful country in which we live.

Mr. President, I know that you live in the midst of difficulties that no one else in the world can really understand. As the Bible teaches us, we pray for you and our country's other leaders every week in our churches. But we believe that, because we are free citizens in our country, God holds

us responsible for our government's actions. And so I am compelled to plead that the separation of children from their parents is a terrible mistake, that the process of law is due to everyone who comes into our country, and that just and generous immigration laws must be drafted and enacted.

Trusting that God will give you strength and insight equal to your tasks, and asking God to bless you and your family, I am

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "The Rev. Richard H. Graham". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

The Rev. Richard H. Graham, Bishop

*In Partnership with:*

*The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Slovakia, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia, the Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Namibia, and The Lutheran Church in El Salvador*