

# Democrats Tap Array of Faith Leaders to Speak at Convention

The Episcopal bishop of Washington, D.C., who criticized President Donald Trump after he held a Bible aloft at a photo op at a historic church in her diocese, is among the diverse group of faith leaders selected by Democrats to speak at their presidential nominating convention.

Bishop Mariann Budde will deliver the benediction on Tuesday, the second night of the convention, according to a list shared with The Associated Press on Sunday before its public release. The convention will be almost entirely virtual, with online video addresses. Former Vice President Joe Biden is expected to accept the nomination on Thursday.

Budde was outspoken in her criticism of Trump for staging the June 1 visit to the historic St. John's Church across from the White House, where he held up a Bible after authorities had cleared the area of people protesting peacefully against racial injustice. "He took the symbols sacred to our tradition and stood in front of a house of prayer in full expectation that would be a celebratory moment," Budde said in an interview after Trump's walk from the White House.

Other faith leaders scheduled to speak include the Rev. Gabriel Salguero, the Florida-based pastor who founded the National Latino Evangelical Coalition; Jerry Young of the Mississippi-based New Hope Baptist Church; Archbishop Elpidophoros, leader of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America; and Rabbi Lauren Berkun, vice president of the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America.

Reflecting Democrats' interest in interfaith engagement, Berkun is one of four faith leaders from three religious

traditions who are scheduled to speak on Thursday, the convention's final day. The party also planned an interfaith service on Sunday.

Also set to speak on Thursday are Sister Simone Campbell, executive director of the advocacy group NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice and a longtime Biden ally dating to the push to pass President Barack Obama's health care plan; the Rev. James Martin, a Jesuit priest and editor at large of the Jesuit magazine America; and Imam Al-Hajj Talib 'Abdur-Rashid, a Muslim social justice activist who leads the New York-based Mosque of Islamic Brotherhood.

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