

Message: “The Election, Politics and Christianity”, presented by Rev. Kristen Lowe on MM-DD-YYYY at Crossroads United Methodist Church, Waunakee, WI.

As Christians, we are called together to unify for things like peace and justice... to do God's will and to move our world forward into God's kingdom.

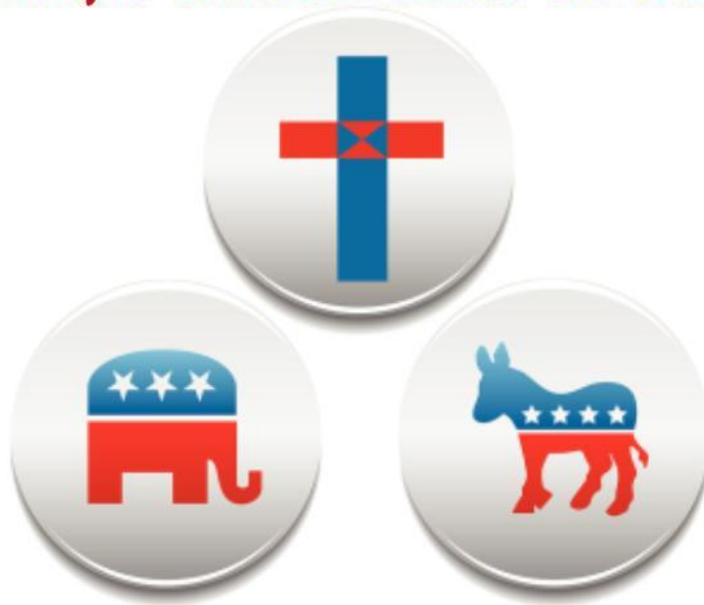
Colossians 3:14-15

“Clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body, and be thankful.”

May God's powerful words seep into our hearts. Amen.

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Election, Politics and Christianity



A United States Senator is in a busy restaurant where his waiter brings over the rolls, but no butter.

The Senator asks, “May I have the butter please?”

The waiter nods and goes back to the kitchen, but emerges without the butter. So the senator catches his eye again and says, “Excuse me, may I get some butter?”

Again, the waiter acknowledges the man but after ten more minutes, there’s still no butter.

The senator then signals the waiter over to his table. “Maybe you don’t know who I am,” says the senator. “I’m a Princeton graduate, a Rhodes scholar, an All-American basketball player who played with the New York Knicks in the pros, and I’m currently a United States senator, chairman of the International Debt Subcommittee of the Senate Finance Committee, chairman of the Water and Power Subcommittee of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and a member of the Senate Select Intelligence Committee.”

The waiter, seeming unimpressed replied, “Maybe you don’t know who I am. I’m the guy who’s in charge of the butter”.

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Do you know who you are? You are a child of God... A Christian disciple, who also happens to be an American citizen. Sometimes these identities line up. Other times, we may feel conflicted. We have many voices tugging at us. And now more than ever, we have the media grabbing our attention and pretty effectively manipulating our perceptions. And, if we're not careful, we can let these messages influence our subconscious.

For instance, televised presidential debates are a relatively new phenomenon in American politics. The practice started with the 1960 presidential debate between Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy. Kennedy appeared looking rested, youthful and tan. Nixon, in contrast, resisted wearing makeup or being styled for television, despite showing the wear of a recent hospital stay. He looked pale, tired and increasingly sweaty as the night wore on. Tellingly, those who watched the debate on TV overwhelmingly saw Kennedy to be the clear winner, while those listening on the radio judged the evening for Nixon.

But aren't these indicators important too? Appearance, poise, how a candidate articulates themselves? Before I answer that we need to back up again to our identity. When it comes down to it, if we are Christian Americans, we want to vote in line with God's will for us.

So... we need to ask the right questions and we need to turn to scripture.

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1 Timothy 2:1-3 Instructions on Worship

“I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for **ALL PEOPLE, for KINGS AND ALL THOSE IN AUTHORITY**, that

we may live *peaceful* and *quiet* lives in all godliness and holiness. ***This is good, and pleases God our Savior.***”

1 Timothy 2:1-2 gives us instructions. It tells us that we are to pray for and honor our government leaders. No matter how much we may dislike them. We are told that, “...petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people, for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior.

For our part, the Christian life carries a prophetic voice that calls us to shine light into dark places.

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Jesus' call for His people to be salt and light to a dying world covers every aspect of life. Matthew 5:13-1: "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden."

We are to shine that light into the world through our daily actions including how we vote and relate to our government.

Reverend Doctor Susan Henry Crowe, general secretary of the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society, wrote a brilliant article in the November December issue of Interpreter Magazine. She states that "Voting is a matter of faith, citizenship and democracy. It is the kind of prayer and faithful testament to the belief that every citizen bears a responsibility and equal right to determine the future of government and society." She adds that, "The mission of the United Methodist Church is to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. One way to transform the world is through the enactment of policies aimed at fostering justice and peace. As people of faith, we must never take for granted the right to vote... May we continue to vote prayerfully at all levels and for all offices so that we might transform the world."

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We get twitchy when politics and religion intersect. However, because we are called to be salt and because we are called to be light, the way we live our lives and the way we influence the world around us by our choices will propel the future.

As faithful Christian Americans we are called to approach the election through a scriptural lens:

Exodus 18:21-22 says, “Select capable individuals from all the people—those who fear God, trustworthy people who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.

These passages show us what civil leaders are to be: “...they should respect and fear God... be bearers of truth, hating covetousness (greed)”.

Isaiah 10:1-2 tells us to defend the poor and oppressed: Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless.

In Deuteronomy, we hear Moses tell the people that the leaders should be in God’s Holy Word daily. They should and we should too – those of us who are electing those leaders.


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We are so privileged to have the freedoms we do! Brave men and women fought to make it possible for us to have a voice in our government.

So, God calls the Christian American voter to get involved!

James 1:22: Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.
“...but be doers of the word, and not hearers only...”

Our United Methodist Heritage gives us some direction. John Wesley, founder of Methodism speaks directly to the election process.



How is it with your soul?

- 1. To vote without fee or reward, for the person judged most worthy.**
- 2. To speak no evil of the person voted against.**
- 3. To take care that their spirits were not sharpened against those that voted on the other side.**

~Journal, October 6, 1774

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I mean, what would it have looked like if, instead of the low blows, our candidates would have entered the arena asking one another, “How is it with your soul?”



It’s important that we ask the candidates that question. We can do that through the process of exploring the facts, weighing the values each candidate stands on, understanding where each person places God in their lives and asking God to be the loudest influence on our hearts.

In the days ahead, pray fervently and constantly for God to help you make the right choice.

Take the card that you have been given to the polls with you. Our job in the days ahead is to approach this election with prayer, listen to the direction God gives you, act upon that direction... and then no matter what the outcome, pray for our leaders in power.

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Please pray with me,

Holy God, come set Your rule and reign in our hearts again. Increase in us, we pray, unveil why we're made. Come set our hearts ablaze with hope like wildfire in our very souls. Holy Spirit come invade us now.

We are Your Church. We pray, revive this earth! Build Your kingdom here and let the darkness fear! Show Your mighty hand! Heal our streets and land. Set Your church on fire. Win this nation back. Change the atmosphere. Build Your kingdom here!

We pray.

We are Your church. We are the hope on earth!

Amen!