



Some thoughts regarding Election Day, and the days before and after as well

From Fr. David+:

As the election winds down, let us all remind ourselves of a powerful truth – we, and everyone we encounter, are all children of God. Siblings don't always see eye to eye, but all are beloved of God. This is why Jesus' commandment on the night he was arrested to be tried and crucified, was "love each other the same way I love you."

Below are some words I have found useful

O God, you have bound us together in a common life. Help us, in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth, to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
—The Book of Common Prayer, page 824

The article below was written by my seminary classmate and good friend, The Reverend Tim Schenk, Rector of Bethesda by the Sea in Palm Beach, Florida. Printed and slightly edited for length and local context, with Tim's permission:

Dear Friends,

As Election Day nears, the rising sense of national anxiety is palpable. It's no news flash to say that our beloved nation is deeply divided.

Here at Bethesda (*and St. Simon's*), we truly are a "purple congregation" — we have people who vote red and we have people who vote blue. We have parishioners who are passionate about their political views, and we have faithful people on every side of every issue facing our country.

I see three responses available to us as a congregation: we could allow politics to divide us, we could stick our heads in the sand and ignore the issues of the day, or we can see this as a unique opportunity to model being in loving, respectful relationship with those who disagree with us politically.

As a church, I like to say that **we are non-partisan, but gospel-centered**. What does that mean? It means that while we don't endorse candidates, we preach a gospel of love and grace and inclusion. It means that we love our neighbors as ourselves. It means that we respect the dignity of every human being. It means that we don't de-humanize or demonize the other side. It means that we recognize that everyone we encounter — no matter who they are or what they look like or what they believe or who they love or where they're from — is first and foremost a child of God. It means that we follow Jesus' command to "love one another as I have loved you."

And then we pray. I encourage you to pray for this country, to pray for the candidates, to pray that the church will offer a faithful witness amid these troubled times.

Thank you Fr. Tim. St. Simon's will be open on Election Day, Tuesday, November 5, for prayer and meditation, from 9:00am to 5:00 pm. All are welcome.

*Finally, the Washington National Cathedral is offering **Election Night Virtual Prayers** from 7:00pm to 9:00 pm on Election Day. This will begin with prayer and a reflection from our **new Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe**. Here's the link to watch and join in via Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TheEPPN/>*

I join Tim in encouraging you to exercise your right to vote, faithfully and with great discernment. As a community, we won't always agree with one another politically, but our unity remains rooted in following Jesus Christ as our Savior and Redeemer.

In Christ,

Fr. David+

Additional prayers, from the Book of Common Prayer:

Pray for direction from God

Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favor, and further us with thy continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in thee, we may glorify thy holy Name, and finally, by thy mercy, obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Pray for the election

Almighty God, to whom we must account for all our powers and privileges: Guide the people of the United States in the election of officials and representatives; that, by faithful administration and wise laws, the rights of all may be protected and our nation be enabled to fulfill your purposes; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.