
Pastoral Letter in Preparation for the Presidential Election

October 20, 2020

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” ³⁸This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.’ Matthew 22:37-40

Greetings, Missouri Mid-South Conference. I write to you two weeks before our nation’s presidential election on November 3, 2020. As a staunch advocate for the separation of church and state, I respect each person’s decision to vote for the candidate they believe will best lead our nation in this time of multiple pandemics. And, we also know that this year’s presidential election is expected to be more contentious than our nation has experienced in a very long time. As such, this election will require more of us than we could imagine as the Body of Christ in the expression of each local Church in the Missouri Mid-South Conference.

Jesus modeled for us how to love our neighbor by standing with the powerless in society and speaking truth to power even and especially in the midst of trial and tribulation. This is what will be required of your Church in the next few months. You have already shown how you follow Jesus by registering people to vote, requiring masks as an expression of your love for all neighbors, serving as a polling location for voting, and praying for your community in the tumultuous days of the pandemics. Thank you.

As your Conference Minister, I write to prepare your Church for the election process and what your love of neighbor may require of you in these upcoming weeks:

1. **The presidential election may not conclude the night of Tuesday, November 3.** Like in 2000, it may go on for days or weeks longer. How will your Church express God’s peace through this time?
2. **Tempers may flare within the congregation as well as on the streets of your community.** How will your Church speak truth to power and express God’s peace through this time?
3. **There may be protests on the streets of your community as there have been throughout this year.** How will your Church stand with the powerless and express God’s peace through this time?

So what can we do?

1. **Pray**

Your private and corporate prayer is needed to surround our nation in God’s peace. We will offer a collection of prayers to support you in your critical role of prayer for our nation.

2. **Lead**

Your Pastor may prophetically speak to your Church and community in this time. Support your Pastor’s leadership and join with leadership of your own.

3. **Act**

Your Church may be asked to act in your community as agents of peace in the midst of protests. The UCC, in collaboration with many religious organizations, has developed an Election Protection Resource Toolkit for local congregations such as yours. This toolkit is extensive. Use as much or as little as you choose.

My friends, I wish that I could wave a magic wand and make the next few months disappear. But I cannot because this is the crux of what it means to live in a democracy. Things may get messy, heated, and perhaps frightening at times. But take heart, that we are not alone. Jesus Christ went before us to embody how we are to love our neighbor in frightening moments; our ancestors have modeled for us Christ's love in courageous ways; and God, our Creator, created us in God's image in order to build the Beloved Community in the midst of trials and tribulations. **We've got this. Our nation's got this. God's got this.**

Blessings and Christ's love to you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ginny Brown Daniel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and a stylized "B".

Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel, Conference Minsiter
Missouri Mid-South Conference