

Rector's Column

*"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice;
but when the wicked rule, the people groan."
Proverbs 29:2*

Dear Friends,

As we approach election season this year, I want to share some resources of the Episcopal Church related to our advocacy on social and environmental issues and overall guidance on approaching political differences for conversations that bridge relationships rather than divide people. The Episcopal Church does not endorse individual political candidates but rather encourages nonpartisan advocacy and political engagement by Episcopalians as a way of witnessing to Jesus' gospel message in today's world. The Episcopal Church's Washington, D.C.-based Office of Government Relations, following public policy positions endorsed by our General Convention, regularly meets with federal officeholders to discuss the church's stances on the issues of the day. It also promotes churchwide engagement through its [Episcopal Public Policy Network](#) which I highly commend to you for awareness and education on our advocacy work within the realms of domestic and global politics.



The Office of Government Relations also urges Episcopalians to "Vote Faithfully" with the help of resources outlined in [its election engagement toolkit](#), which has been updated for this presidential election year. New resources include ways of addressing misinformation, disinformation and political violence. Additionally, Episcopalians can consult the office's toolkit for help in registering to vote, becoming poll workers, mobilizing their communities to participate and advocating for reforms that have been backed by resolutions of The Episcopal Church's General Convention.

The Office of Government Relations hopes that Episcopalians will make use of the Vote Faithfully election engagement campaign resources to help communities vote this fall and participate in healthy civic engagement year-round, rooted in our collective call of our faith to care for one another. The toolkit specifically highlights a resolution passed by General Convention in 2012 that notes, "the United States has been a vigorous human rights advocate for many years, opposing arbitrary restrictions on the right to vote and insisting on fairly conducted elections for legislative representatives."

More recent General Convention resolutions have opposed voter suppression efforts and promoted the expansion of voter eligibility, as outlined in [this resolution passed in 2022](#). Another resolution from that year backed changes to the Electoral Count Act of 1887 intended to prevent threats to democracy like the mob that [attacked the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021](#), seeking to block the certification of Joe Biden's election as president. A full list of public policy resolutions adopted in June 2024 by the 81st General Convention [can be found here](#).

The Office of Government Relations also continues to promote its [Episcopal Activators program](#), in which volunteers help voters in their community navigate the processes for registering to vote and casting ballots, especially in states with new voting restrictions. Episcopalians can sign up with the Episcopal Public Policy Network [to receive action alerts](#) or review the previous alerts archived on the office's website as a first step toward helping the church engage with lawmakers on these issues.

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Lastly, I want to share that the Office of Government Relations has spent the past several years promoting its civil discourse curriculum entitled, [“Make Me an Instrument of Peace: A Guide to Civil Discourse”](#). The curriculum includes pre-recorded video lectures, downloadable study guides, and other course content that can be done by groups, households, or individuals. Each session should take about 50 minutes to complete.

“Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace” is a free, 5-week course designed to help bridge the divides that keep us from moving forward together. Taught by a team of experts in civil discourse, this course includes these five classes:

Civil Discourse in Context with Ranjit Matthews

Tenets for Civil Discourse with Shannon Kelly

Values-Based Conversations with Alan Yarborough

The Complexities of Policy with Rebecca Linder Blachy

Sacred Space for Debate with Marcus Halley

Registration for the free course that provides 24/7 online access to the courses and materials can be done through the [ChurchNext webpage](#). The registration button is located in the top panel of the website. A unique code will be emailed to you, so be sure to check your SPAM folder for an email from ChurchNext, if you don't see the confirmation email in your inbox. Once registered, groups or individuals can begin the curriculum any time.

A separate opportunity for exploring civil discourse will be offered by Christine McKenna and hosted by Rev. Allen Hicks as a four-part weekly series entitled “Faithful Citizenship”. McKenna practiced law for many years, including serving as a judge, and has a Master's Degree from the Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry. This series will be offered (in-person only) at Trinity on Wednesday evenings at 6:30pm-8:00pm on September 14, 18, 25, and October 9. Topics include: Relationship Between Citizens and Government, Economic Justice, Justice for the Earth, and Justice for the Stranger.

In sum, as we approach this election season, I hope we will take advantage of the resources and opportunities available to Trinity for study and reflection. I pray that each of us might engage the highly-charged political topics of our time and the concerns we and others may hold with the compassion and advocacy of our faith and with a sense of gratitude and responsibility for the opportunity to uphold the democratic principles of our nation as diverse citizens of these United States.

In Peace,
Pastor Rachel+

The Rev. Rachel Taber-Hamilton, Rector