

The PACE is published by

Grace Episcopal Church

36200 Ridge Rd.

Willoughby, OH 44094

(440) 942-1015

E-mail

Office@GraceWilloughby.org

Web Site

<http://GraceWilloughby.org>



"Like us on Facebook"

Church Office Hours

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Monday - Friday

Children's Christian Education

Sunday School

Team teaching by:

Bobbin Davis

Phil Davis

April Frazier

Lynn Kramp

Kristin Ludvik

Cathy Nash

Debbie Zimmerman

Co-Directors

Cathy Nash &

Debbie Zimmerman

We are disciples of Jesus:
helping one another be the
hands and feet of Christ by
sharing God's love with the
world.

Deadline for next *Pace* is
Sunday, October 18, 2020



The *Pace* of Grace

October 2020

From the Rector:



Dear Friends,

We have exciting news to share! Our Phase One renovation is officially underway, and the work of the Long-Range Planning Team is coming to fruition. It is anticipated that once the needed demolition is done the project will take about ten weeks to complete. The offices will be packed up and relocated, furniture moved, and demolition done by the week of Oct. 12.

The Church office and Rector's office will be moved to the Chapel area of the Narthex and temporary walls constructed so that church business can continue uninterrupted and proper physical distance maintained. While there is a need to store some items in the Nave during construction, please be assured that it remains sacred space and will be treated as such. We will continue to base our online worship in the chancel area. Mark will continue to work from home three days a week and will be in the office on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. I will continue to be in the office and available as I have been.

There should be no interruption of worship, study, or fellowship since we continue to meet by Zoom. If you have any questions, please get in touch with me or a Vestry member.

If there is a silver lining in the restrictions necessitated by COVID, it is that it has resulted in decreased traffic in the building so work can continue without interruption. The other blessing we have received is the presence of a person known as the owner's representative for the project. This person represents us with the contractor and the architect, and acts as our eyes, ears, and voice to manage the project from our perspective.

Those of you who have been a long-time member of Grace may remember a young man by the name of Andy Simons, youngest son of a former rector of Grace Church. Andy is all grown up and very well experienced in this work. It is absolutely a God happening that Andy is with us! It is obvious in every interaction that he has a great love for Grace Church and that he has our best interests at heart.

Additionally, the firm that we have contracted with to do the construction is headed by a fellow Episcopalian who is a member of St. James

Continued inside

Officers and Rector

Kathy Hill

Senior Warden

Cathy Nash

Junior Warden

Harry Dodds

Treasurer

Elizabeth Estep

Clerk

The Rev. Rose Anne Lonsway,

Rector

Inside this *Pace*

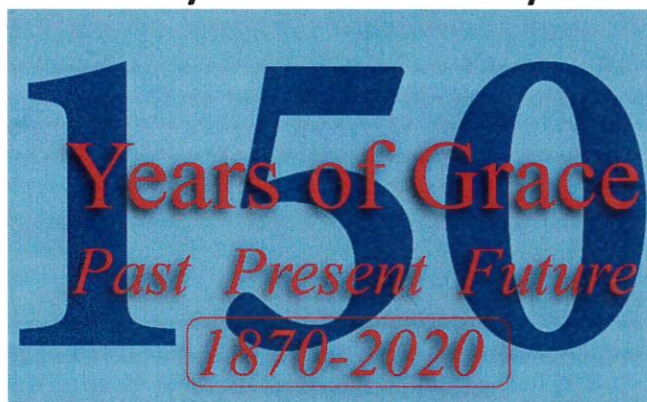
**150th Anniversary Celebrations
Delayed (Below)**

This & That

- Outreach Team Updates
- Evangelism Updates
- Kids Corner
- Stewardship Update
- Worship Update
- Vestry Highlights

***Inserts: September Calendar/Volunteer
Schedule; A Message from Bishop Curry
Lessons / Readings***

150th Anniversary Celebrations Delayed until 2021



Mother Rose Anne, the Vestry, and the 150th Anniversary Committee have agreed that there is no prudent way to move forward with the planned events celebrating the 150th anniversary of Grace Episcopal Church under current circumstances. As a result, all events—including the dinner fund-raiser (which had been scheduled for October 2), special worship services, and other gatherings—have been postponed until 2021. In the spring, leadership will reassess how and when the parish can safely move forward with these events.

This is very disappointing for all of us. But, while the 151st Anniversary may not roll off the tongue as easily, the parish should have major reasons to celebrate next year. Renovations to the church, including new offices and a larger upstairs gathering space, should be completed. (See Mother Rose Anne's column for updates on that project.) And, God willing, we hope to enjoy the resumption of in-person worship, fellowship events, and other activities once our community and our country are in a safer place in relation to the COVID-19 virus. We know one thing for certain: When we're able to get together again as a parish family, Grace will remember how to have fun!



From the Rector, continued



Painesville and has been involved in major renovation projects there. I can assure you that we are in good hands and that God has brought us exceptional people as we renovate our building to be a place of warmth and welcome to the community at large and as we work together to take our Lord Jesus into the world around us.

On another note, your Vestry has committed to participate in learning more about racism and how it influences our perception and behavior. I encourage you to join with your Vestry in learning more of the effects that racism has on our human family and how it interferes with loving our neighbors as God calls us to do.

The Diocesan Council (of which I am a member) has committed to this process through watching the documentary *13th* and reading the book *White Fragility*. There are copies of the book available to sign out from the office, and the documentary *13th* is available on YouTube and Netflix. We are aware that there has been some controversy about the book, however, it never hurts to read differing positions and opinions, so that we can ask sound questions, learn, expand our thinking, and truly come to be proponents of Anti-Racism!

Lastly, I point you to the sermon found in this newsletter, delivered by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry. (The sermon has been included as a special insert.) Bishop Curry discusses the critical importance of voting and what the Gospel of Jesus expects from us, the Christian community.

I urge you to give this a good read, as it is filled with information and ideas, emphasizing the importance of not just being present but truly showing up. We can be agents of change, modeling Micah 6:8, which tells us what is good in God's eyes—"to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God." This is so needed in our world today. Let's make a difference with God's help!

- M. Rose Anne+

OUTREACH TEAM UPDATES

Friends of Recovery Update: Dennis Anthony, director of Friends of Recovery NEO, delivered a presentation at the September 1 Outreach meeting.

The mission of Friends of Recovery is to provide Christ-centered recovery homes offering hope, healing and restoration for individuals recovering from addictive substances. These homes provide a safe, affordable, drug- and alcohol-free residential environment for both women and men that have chosen recovery. As the women and men grow in their recovery they will learn respect, accountability, responsibility and healthy relationship building. Most importantly, they will learn they have a loving Father waiting with open arms who can and will set them free. While staying in the houses the residents are taught the life skills necessary to blossom into functioning, productive members of society. Everyone will learn such things as what addiction is and how it affects them and their family. Lifesaving tools to help throughout one's recovery journey are also offered.

The Friends of Recovery are there to offer hope, help and let those on their journey of recovery know that they are not alone. (This information was taken from Spring/Summer 2019 brochure. More information can be found at www.friendsofrecoveryneo.com, or visit them on Facebook.)

The group operates two (soon to be three) homes for alcohol and drug addiction continuing recovery. The men's house, Tikvah ("Hope") House, is 3 years old. The women's residence, Arukah ("Healing") House, opened August 22 of this year. Per the City of Willoughby only four residents can live in each house. Currently one woman lives in Arukah House, but three more women are expected to move in shortly. There is another home which will be for women and their dependent children.

All residents must have completed a treatment program and be 30 days free from addictive substances. If the residents have a job when entering a house, they must continue to work. If they do not have a job, they must do community service until they find employment. They are required to attend a church of

their choice each week. Regular counseling sessions are held. The residents have a community meal and support meeting once a week. Usually about 25 people attend. Most meals are donated. The residents are counseled to develop an exit plan and support and guidance is given along the way. Most residents stay in the home about a year. Residents pay a small fee to live there. The houses are budgeted \$35 per house per week for food and essentials.

Hopefully more opportunities to reach out to and support this ministry will become available and we will pass them along to you.

If you would like to donate to this healing ministry the items they need most right now are paper products, cleaning and disinfecting supplies, Marc's and Aldi's grocery gift cards, and cash donations. Donations can be dropped off at Grace and they will be taken to the houses. (There is a box in the library already set up for donations.)

Little Feet Update: At this point we are still waiting to hear from the school liaisons for a plan as to how we will move forward supplying shoes this year.

Next Meeting: The next Outreach Zoom meeting will be October 6 at 7:00 pm. All are welcome to attend and share ideas for reaching out to those in need in our community.

- The Outreach Team

EVANGELISM UPDATES

Forbes House Update: At our September meeting Peggy told us Forbes is still in need of pantry supplies. They seem to disappear as quickly as they come in due a full house and the need to stay in because of COVID. To try to help this need it was decided that Grace will have donations ready for pick-up on the second Tuesday of each month starting in October.

Embracing Evangelism: Embracing Evangelism began Thursday, September 3 and continues every other Thursday. There are three Embracing Evangelism sessions this month (October 1, 15, and 29). Dave and Peggy are facilitating the program and will repeat the program again if there is any interest.

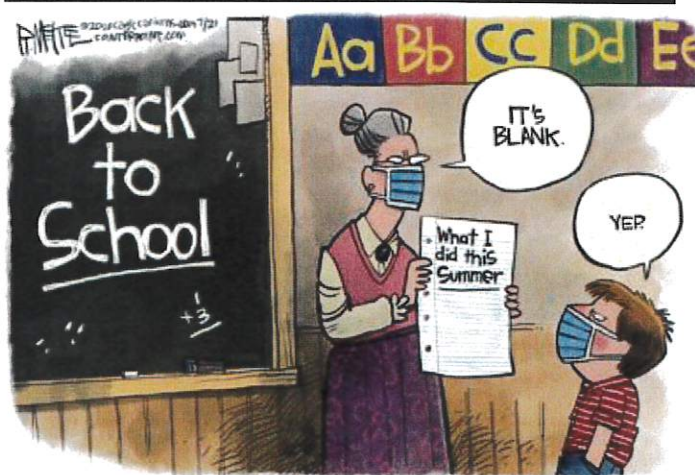
Church Next: Elizabeth Estep will be the administrator for the Church Next Christian formation program. This program can be done individually or as a group. The diocese has given Grace this program free of charge for the first year, normally the cost is \$300. Elizabeth is looking into this program and will let everyone know more information as soon as she has all the details.

Discussions about Race: Mother Rose Anne let us know that Mayor Fiala met with the Willoughby Area Ministerial Association (WAMA) for a race relations discussion. A small follow-up meeting was held including people of color. More discussions are being planned.

Next Meeting: Please join us for our next meeting on zoom on Tuesday October 6 at 6:00 pm. Try us out and see if we are a good fit.

- Peggy Burkacki

KIDS CORNER



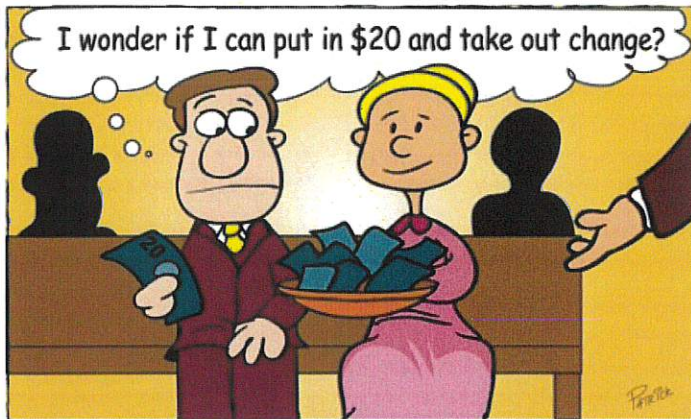
Hi to all our Sunday School friends! We want you to know we are thinking of you. Regardless of how you are going back to school this fall, we hope you have fun, learn a lot, and have a great school year.

We also hope you are enjoying the Sunday Paper Junior bulletins you are receiving in the mail. If you are not receiving the Sunday Paper Junior but would like to, have your parents call the church office.

Hopefully, we will see you soon!

- The Sunday School Team

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE



Thank you to everyone who has faithfully sent in their pledges during this pandemic. I was truly amazed at how parishioners were able to switch gears and mail in their financial commitment to Grace since we have not been able to meet in person.

This year since we can't get together in person the Stewardship Team will be mailing the annual pledge cards. Included in the mailing will be a Mad Lib. We adapted the format from Christ Church in Chicago to meet our needs. "Mad Libs are stories with words removed and replaced by blank spaces. You are asked to fill in the blanks with adjectives, nouns, verbs and more." Following the Annual 2020 Stewardship Campaign we will set a date to go over how everyone filled in the blanks. This will probably be a special Zoom meeting. Once you see the format, I think you will agree this event could be informative and a lot of fun!

More details will follow the Stewardship meeting on October 8 at 7:00pm.

- *The Stewardship Team*
Frank Burkacki, Sandy Gonzalez, Mother Rose
Anne Lonsway, Toni Swisher, Dave Zimmerman



WORSHIP UPDATES

Altar Guild:

- Judith Junda, a member of the Altar Guild set up the altar for spiritual communion at our 10:00 am Zoom service. We are currently offering Spiritual Communion the first Sunday of each month, and Morning Prayer on the other Sundays.
- Nancy Brothers will order the Advent candles.

Educational programs:

- "Embracing Evangelism" is underway (see Evangelism Updates).
- The Wednesday Morning Study Group began reading a new book September 30. The group is now reading "Holy Envy" by Barbara Brown Taylor. Jean Ockuly is leading the study.

Sunday School: We may be looking for on-line programs for kids. With so much time already being spent on Zoom, our kids may be "Zoomed out" by now. Considering that, we may hold off on offering any programs until Advent. The Sunday school paper continues to be sent out.

Worship and Covid-19:

- It was mentioned that if the 8:00 am in-house service was resumed; a reservation system might be helpful. When the top number of people is reached then a rotation system would have to be used.
- Per a recent Clericus meeting, Mother Rose Anne reported worship activities from the following churches: St. Bartholomew - outside; St. Martens - outside; St. Luke's - inside; Epiphany - services twice a month, a combination of services inside and outside; St. Hubert - inside but not in the Nave (they are meeting in a larger space); St. James - inside, 8:00 am only.
- Zoom services and Facebook services continue to go well. Technical challenges are being successfully met thanks to Elizabeth Estep. Our

continued thanks to Scott, Jen and James for the beautiful music and song.

Upcoming services:

- The Feast of Grace service was held September 20 via Zoom.
- We need to begin planning for Advent and Christmas services and possible activities.
- As a reminder, beginning September 6, the Bishop indicated that we may begin providing communion under certain restrictions.

Next meeting: The next Worship Committee meeting will be Thursday, October 8 at 6:00 via Zoom. All are welcome to attend.

- Kathy Hill

VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights from the September 19 Vestry Meeting:

Finance Committee: The parish audit was completed and submitted to diocese. The audit committee comprised Debra Zimmerman, Dave Zimmerman, and Phil Davis.

Building Plan:

- **Andy Simon presented the Owner's Rep Report.**
- A [re-construction conference was scheduled with Joe, Art, and Mother Rose Anne to kick off the project. The 10 weeks of the project would end the first week in December.
- A grant request submitted to the Diocese this week.

COVID-19 and Worship: Potential for re-opening was discussed. It was moved and seconded that we continue with the current status of services. The motion carried by acclamation.

Nomination of Convention Delegates:

- We received notice from the Diocese that we met criteria to have voice and vote at Convention.
- The Diocesan Annual Convention will be online, only Saturday on Nov 14.
- Vestry has to elect 3 delegates and 3 alternates, who should be registered by 23-Oct. Delegates need two electronic devices: one for Zoom, and the other to vote and Vestry will ask parishioners

if they want to participate and elect them at next meeting in October.

Senior Warden's Report:

- Safeguarding God's Children training – Mark will be reminding non-Vestry people who still need to take the training.
- Donation check given to McKinley. They are very grateful.

Junior Warden's Report:

- Re-seeding/re-planting: In progress. There is still landscaping in progress. Someone cleared out flower bed downstairs.
- The storage Shed has been removed.
- Outdoor faucets. Will not be replacing the second faucet. Contractors will have to come back to fix the hole in the wall in the janitor's room.
- The broken undercroft Window has been replaced. We are looking at adding aluminum screening to protect the windows from future damage.

Foundation: No update this month.

Rector's Report:

- Anti-Racism Training: Mother Rose Anne urged the Vestry to take advantage of the Diocese's anti-racism training that all Diocesan elected leaders to take, which is available to all diocesan members.
- NAMI Walk: Same day as Anti-Racism training but is going to be done 'virtually.' Rose Anne is sponsoring a team for it. She is looking for team members or sponsors.
- Scouts: Scouting may be going virtual for the time being.

Stewardship: Gearing up for the Fall Campaign (see update elsewhere in this *Pace*).

Evangelism, Outreach and Worship: Also look for updates from these teams elsewhere in this *Pace*.

Next Meeting:

- The next formal Vestry meeting will be October 17, 2020.
- The Vestry will continue its informal weekly check-ins. All meetings and check-ins are occurring via Zoom.



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2020

JOIN OUR TEAM FOR NAMIWALKS YOUR WAY

Mother Rose Anne is once again organizing a team for the annual NAMI Walk. This year's event, NAMI Walk Your Way, will be held Saturday, October 10.

It will be a virtual experience joined by NAMI Walks across the country. Participants can walk a 5K through their neighborhood, around their backyard, on their treadmill, etc.

All funds raised directly support the mission of NAMI to provide support, education, and advocacy to individuals and families right here in our community.

TOGETHER WE CAN:

- **Promote awareness** of mental health and reduce stigma, in this difficult year more than ever by sharing stories widely.
- **Raise funds** for NAMI's mission of advocacy, support, and public awareness
- **Build community** and reassure people they are not alone

Please **JOIN OUR TEAM** and participate with us, or **SUPPORT US** by making a donation to a team member listed on our **ROSTER**. Donations on this site are fast, secure, and easy.

Together, we are moving closer to a world where all people affected by mental illness live healthy, fulfilling lives supported by a community that cares. **Mental Health for All.**

To support Mother Rose Anne's "Ambling Advocates" Team during this year's Virtual NAMI Walk, please visit:

<https://www.namiwalks.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=donorDrive.team&teamID=38218>

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READINGS FOR THE DAY

Dated material
Please deliver by October 4, 2020

October 4
The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Proper 22

Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20
Psalm 19
Philippians 3:4b-14
Matthew 21:33-46

October 11
The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Proper 23

Exodus 32:1-14
Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23
Philippians 4:1-9
Matthew 22:1-14

October 18
The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost
Proper 24

Exodus 33:12-23
Psalm 99
1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
Matthew 22:15-22

October 25
The Twenty-first Sunday After Pentecost
Proper 25

Deuteronomy 34:1-12
Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17
1 Thessalonians 2:1-8
Matthew 22:34-46

A message from Presiding Bishop Michael Curry

The following is a Word to the Church from Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, and is also the text of his sermon at The Episcopal Church House of Bishops, which met virtually September 16, 2020.

And now in the name of our loving, liberating and life-giving God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Amen.

This November, the people of the United States will elect a president and many others to public office. This election occurs in a time of global pandemic, a time when there is hardship, sickness, suffering and death. But this election also occurs in a time of great divisions. Divisions that are deep, dangerous, and potentially injurious to democracy. So what is the role of the church in the context of an election being held in a time such as this? What is our role as individual followers of Jesus Christ committed to his way of love in such a time as this?

Allow me to offer a text from the Acts of the Apostles. The introduction to the Acts from the first chapter. Luke writes, “In the first book,” referring to the Gospel of Luke:

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when he was taken up into heaven.

“In the first book . . . I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught.” All that he did, all that he taught.

In a powerful sermon preached at the July meeting of the House of Bishops, Bishop Scott Hayashi of Utah said something that might be helpful to us. He made mention of the little acronym, what would Jesus . . . WWJD, What Would Jesus Do? And he said that can be a helpful way of discerning what we might be being called to do at any given time. But he offered another alternative. He said, “What would happen if we began to ask the question, not what would Jesus do, but what did Jesus do? What did he do? What did he teach? What do Matthew, Mark, Luke and John tell us that Jesus did and taught?” I want to suggest that addressing that question, “What did Jesus do?” and summoning the Spirit to help us apply it to our lives and to our times may mean the difference between the church simply being another religious institution that exists for its own sake and the church being a Jesus movement that courageously follows the way of Jesus and his love, not for its sake, but for the sake of the world that Christ gave his life for and rose from the dead in.

As you know, The Episcopal Church does not endorse, support, or oppose political candidates for elective office. And there is good reason for that. First, in the United States, tax exempt, religious, and charitable organizations are by law prohibited from such endorsement, support, or opposition to candidates. This does not prohibit churches from engaging in voter education, voter registration, helping people get to the polls to vote, or even advocating for issues of public policy reflective of the tenants of our faith. And every citizen, including those of us who are members of the church have our rights and responsibilities as well.

Secondly, there are good and faithful followers of Jesus Christ who are Episcopalian. Some are Republican, some are Democrat, some are independents, some liberal, some centrist, some conservative. And just as we must respect the right of every citizen to cast his or her own vote according to the dictates of their conscience, so we must do so in the church, the body of Jesus Christ. And that is how it should be. The Bible says we have one Lord, one faith, one baptism, not one political party. But it’s important to remember that partisan neutrality does not mean moral neutrality. Partisan neutrality, bidden to us by human civil law does not mean moral neutrality, because we are bidden to obey the royal law of almighty God. And this may be where our text helps us.

“In the first book Theophilus, I wrote all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until he was taken up into heaven.” When Luke says, “The first book,” he’s referring to the Gospel, but

notice what he does so skillfully. Ancient tradition says that Luke was a physician. And we know that this Luke was the author of both the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles and tradition says he was a physician. You can see elements of that throughout both books. But in this text, Luke the physician sounds more like Luke the lawyer. In this text, Luke is suggesting that the Jesus we see in the Gospel, what he did and what he taught, is precedent. It is the precedent for how those who would follow him will act and live in their days and in their times. Just as precedents are critical to the law, the precedent of Jesus is critical to the life of those who would follow him in the first century or in the 21st century.

When Jesus says that the entire law and will of God is summed up in the words, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself," that's precedent. When Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan about somebody, who as that old song says, "If I can help somebody along the way, then my living will not be in vain." When he tells the parable of the Good Samaritan, of somebody who helps somebody else even though they were a different religious tradition, even though they were of a different ethnic group, even though they may have differed in their politics, differed in their worldview, differed in virtually everything except the fact that they inhale oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. Even with all of those differences he helped him because that person, that man was a human child of God created in the image of God. Jesus says, "Now, who was neighbor to the man?" This is what loving your neighbor looks like. And then Jesus says, "Go and do likewise." That's precedent.

When, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, "blessed are the poor and the poor in spirit"; "blessed are those who are compassionate and merciful"; "blessed are the peacemakers"; "blessed are those who hunger and thirst and labor for God's righteous justice to be done on the earth for all"; "do unto others, as you would have them do unto you"; "love your enemies, bless those who curse you, pray for those who spitefully use you"; my sisters, my brothers, my siblings, that is the precedent for what it means to follow in the way of Jesus in the first century or the 21st century. Saint Paul heard and knew these teachings of Jesus. And he summarized their meaning. Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good. Henry David Thoreau, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, all spoke of this as the nonviolent way of love.

The task of the church in the first century or 21st century is to live by the precedent, to bear witness to the precedent and lift up the values of the precedent of Jesus in our time. Because as the book of Hebrews says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." What would Jesus do?

So what can we do? Well, we can vote as individuals. We can vote, and we can help others to register and to get to the polls and cast their vote. We can encourage others to vote as their conscience leads them. And I know someone is probably thinking, that's true but what does that have to do with Jesus Christ?

What does voting have to do with the Gospel? What does voting have to do with being a Christian? An election for public office is not a popularity contest between two or more people. It's a contest of ideas about how to shape the future of a community, nation and maybe even a world. It's a contest, a debate, a discernment of moral values and their relationship to public policy. Voting is an act of moral agency. It is an act of moral discernment and decision. It is how a community or a nation decides how the moral values that it holds and shares shape public policy and the lives of people. The children of God. It is salutary to remember that partisan neutrality does not mean moral neutrality.

The vote is so sacred and important for all people, regardless of your religious tradition or your politics or your nationality. The vote, as an act of moral humanity, is so important that people have given their lives for it. If you don't believe Michael Curry, ask the people of Belarus right now. Ask the American martyrs who sacrificed, gave their lives, gave that last full measure of devotion so that people might have the right to vote. Ask Michael Schwerner, ask James Chaney, ask Andrew

Goodman in Mississippi, ask the martyrs of Selma, of Viola Liuzzo, Jimmie Lee Jackson, Jonathan Daniels.

America's soldiers have fought to defend freedom. Many of them have given their lives. And many of them live with wounds and the scars of war. And one of the freedoms they defended was the freedom, the right, and the responsibility of the vote.

John Lewis in his last published writing before his death said, and I quote, "The vote is the most powerful nonviolent change agent that you have in a democratic society," end quote. There actually is in the New Testament an example of this model of living for followers of Jesus. You'll find it in the writings of St. Paul in the 12th, 13th, and 14th chapters of Romans. I don't mean to suggest that Paul voted, he didn't. He was a Roman citizen, but he lived not in the time of the Roman Republic, but in the time of the Roman Empire. But Paul in Romans 13 specifically identified the teachings of Jesus with how he would live his life in both civil society and in Christian community.

In the 13th chapter of Romans, he speaks about the role of government. And then he quickly shifts from speaking about the role of government to the role of the citizen. And then the role of the Christian, who is a disciple in the empire. He says, "You have to pay taxes to whom taxes are due, and an honor to whom honor is due." And then he says, "But owe no one anything except to love one another. For the one who loves another has fulfilled the law." The commandments, you shall not murder; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not covet; and in any other commandment, are summed up in this word, love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no wrong to a neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Partisan neutrality is not the same as moral neutrality. It was not in the first century and it is not today. The royal law of love is the fulfillment of the law and the will of God. It is the ultimate standard, norm and guide for following the way of Jesus in any society, in any time. With grace to aid and conscience to guide, each of us must discern and decide what love of neighbor looks like in our lives, in our actions, in our personal relationships and in our social and public witness. What did Jesus do?

The vote is vitally important, but it's not enough. The wounds and the divisions in American society are so deep that even an election by itself cannot heal them. The murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and so many others has exposed the death-dealing depth of racism and white supremacy deeply embedded in the soil and in the soul of America. We can't go on like this.

Just this past weekend, two deputy sheriffs in Compton, California were deliberately shot as they sat on duty in their car. And then a group of people tried to block the entrance to the hospital where they were being taken, shouting, "Let them die." Those two sheriffs are children of God. George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor are children of God. We cannot go on this way.

In 1858, as divisions in this nation over slavery, born of racism, would lead to a civil war, Abraham Lincoln gave a speech warning the nation quoting the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, who said, "A house divided against itself, cannot stand." I am not suggesting that we are on the verge of a civil war, but we must not underestimate the danger of the divisions that we are in. These divisions are dangerous, injurious to democracy itself. We must, and I believe we can, find a better way.

I am a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, because I believe he has shown us that better way. I believe that the way of unselfish sacrificial love can show us the way of repentance, the way to repair the breach. The way of reconciliation that ultimately can lead us to the beloved community, but it's not easy. And this is long distance work. There are no quick fixes because the wounds are so deep, but we need not feel enslaved by fate. We are not people of fate. We are people of faith in the God who raised Jesus from the dead. Nothing can defeat God or stop God's cause of love. The way will not be easy, but we can do this.

I've included some links to resources that may be helpful to you:

- One is an online curriculum titled, “[Make Me an Instrument of Peace: A Guide to Civil Discourse](#),” prepared by our Office of Government Relations.
- Another is titled, “[Learn, Pray, Act: Resources for Responding to Racist Violence](#),” curated by our staff for racial reconciliation and justice and the Office of Government Relations.
- Another contains [Resources from the Center for Racial Healing and the Diocese of Atlanta](#)
- And another contains resources titled, “[With Malice Toward None](#),” an ecumenical nonpartisan program designed for churches and faith communities and groups of all kinds to provide a way of understanding and healing for those on any side of the political spectrum, both before and after the November elections.

On March 10th, 2016, then presidential candidate Donald Trump spoke at a campaign rally in Fayetteville, North Carolina. The rally was disrupted by protestors, which happened around the country to both Trump and Clinton campaigns. Eventually law enforcement officials led the protesters out. As they did a 79-year-old Trump supporter named John McGraw, who is white, jumped out from the crowd and punched Rakeem Jones, one of the protesters who is black. Punched him in the face. Afterward McGraw said, and I quote, “He deserved it. The next time we see him, we might have to kill him. We don’t know who he is. He might be with a terrorist organization” end quote.

McGraw was arrested and charged with assault. Months later, the two men met again, this time in court. McGraw pleaded no contest, apologized and was sentenced to 12 months’ probation. Afterward, the two men faced each other and shook hands. McGraw said, and I quote, “If I met you in the street and the same thing occurred, I would have said, ‘Go home. One of us will get hurt. That’s what I would have said. But we are caught up in a political mess today, you and me, we’ve got to heal our country.’” Sometime after that, at the request of Rakeem Jones, John McGraw and Rakeem Jones went out and ate lunch together. There is the sign of hope. They went to lunch together.

There’s an old spiritual created and sung by slaves of antebellum America that said,
I’m going to come to the welcoming table one of these days.
I’m going to eat at the welcoming table one of these days.
I’m going to drink milk and honey at the welcoming table one of these days.
I’m going to cross the River Jordan one of these days.
I’m going to eat.
We’re going to eat at the welcoming table one of these days.

We can, we will, we must learn to eat at that welcoming table. Jesus has shown us the way, it is the way of unselfish, sacrificial love. And that way can make room for us all. So walk together, children. Don’t you get weary because there’s a great camp meeting in the promised land. Amen.

Resources:

- “[Make Me an Instrument of Peace: A Guide to Civil Discourse](#),” online curriculum from the Office of Government Relations
- “[Learn, Pray, Act: Resources for Responding to Racist Violence](#),” curated by Episcopal Church staff for Racial Reconciliation and Justice and the Office of Government Relations
- [Resources from the Center for Racial Healing and the Diocese of Atlanta](#)
- “[With Malice Toward None](#),” a program designed for churches and groups to provide a way for understanding and healing for all sides of our political divisions for both before and after the November election