

## Dates to Remember!

Voter Registration Deadline: October 14th

Early Voting: October 22-November 1st

Last Day to Request an Absentee Ballot: October 29th

Election Day-November 4th



## How Can I Vote?

### Absentee by Mail:

- West Virginia allows voters to vote by an absentee mail-in ballot if they will be unable to vote in person on Election Day or during the Early Voting period because of illness, injury, physical disability, or incarceration for minor crimes; they will be outside of the county during the voting period due to travel, work, or attendance at a college or university; they temporarily live outside of the county because of a job assignment no longer than four years; or they participates in the state's Address Confidentiality Program.
- Voters must apply for an absentee mail-in ballot. Applications must be received by the county by the 6th day before an election.
- Completed ballots must be received the day before Election Day, or postmarked by Election Day if returned by mail.

### Early In Person:

- All registered voters may vote early in person without an excuse. Early voting begins on the 13th day before the election and continues until 3 days before the election. You may vote early during regular business hours, including Saturdays during the early voting period. Check with your County Clerk's office for specific location and times.

### On Election Day at the Polls:

- The polls are open from 6:30 a.m. until 7:30 p.m.

# Presbyterians and Democracy

## A Voter Education Resource

Presbyterians have had a long history of being involved both in government and the election process. Grady Parson, PCUSA Stated Clerk made the following point in a document entitled, *Presbyterians and Politics: Disturbers of Governments*, he states: "If we bear witness and serve the Lord, then, as a church and as individuals, we have a clear responsibility to concern ourselves with the social and political sphere also. To say nothing and to do nothing in this sphere is to deny our own Gospel. It is to say that there are at least some areas in the world and in our own lives where God is NOT Lord..."

We hope that the following resources will allow you to assist your congregation in preparing for the Mid-term elections in November. We have provided you with a biblical and theological perspective on why Christians are called to participate in both local and national politics in advocating for issues important to Christians and in participating as part of the voting and electoral process.

You will also find ways to learn more about the candidates running for office in the mid-term elections, and ways that your members can become involved in the voting process; educating others, registering people to vote, taking people to the polls etc.



# THE CHURCH AND POLITICS

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Scripture gives insights into ways Christians are faithfully to engage in politics. IN studying the relationship of faith and politics, we are challenged to move from thinking theologically about the issues to acting faithfully in response as Jesus' disciples.

### **Biblical Leaders in the Political Debate**

Exodus 5: Moses petitioned Pharaoh to free God's people.

2 Samuel 12: Nathan confronted King David for his actions.

1 Kings 18: Elijah took on King Ahab who promoted immorality.

Isaiah 1: Isaiah condemned moral decay in the culture.

Jeremiah 22: Jeremiah delivers the Word of the Lord, a call for justice and a warning against oppression..

Amos 1: Amos criticized injustice in society.

Matthew 26: 47-55 Jesus condemns the way of the sword.

Matthew 22:15-22 Jesus distinguishes between the things of God and the things of the emperor.

Acts 5:29 Peter and the Apostles declare their obedience to God and against any human authority.

Acts 11: Peter criticized leaders for restricting his preaching.

Romans 13: 1-7 Paul explains that government authorities are instituted by God.

### **Excerpt from A Brief Statement of Faith**

In a broken and fearful world  
the Spirit gives us the courage  
to pray without ceasing,  
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,  
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,  
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,  
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.  
In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,  
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks  
and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new  
earth,  
Praying, "come, Lord Jesus."  
*From the Book of Confessions (10.4-10.5)*

## Presbyterians and Politics Resources

### **Presbyterians and Politics: Disturbers of Governments**

<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/curriculum/presbyterians-and-politics-disturbers-governments/>

### **Being Reformed: Faith Seeing Understanding The Church and Politics David True**

This study helps participants consider questions about the church and politics, particularly as we look at our Reformed and Presbyterian traditions in the United States

[www.thepresbyterianleader.com/Products/CategoryCenter/PCUR!REF/being-reformed-curriculum.aspx](http://www.thepresbyterianleader.com/Products/CategoryCenter/PCUR!REF/being-reformed-curriculum.aspx)

### **Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights and Electoral Reform**

This report recommends ways to strengthen democratic — small d — promise and practice in the political life of the United States based on principles of Reformed Christianity.

[Order from the Presbyterian Church Store, Item Number: 0205208003](#)

### **Advocacy as Discipleship: A People Called to Witness**

This four-week devotional is designed with an in-depth reflection on Day One of each week to introduce each topic, with Days Two through Seven featuring centering quotations, questions and opportunities for contemplation. On Day Four of every week, a short story will help you or your small group reflect on how the subject of advocacy touches your own lives. This resource will use the Bible, our Confessions and Presbyterian writings alongside resources from beyond our denomination to help us think about how God is calling us into action and reflection today.

To download go to: <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/advocacy-discipleship-people-called-witness/>

### **Holy Discontentment Advocacy Resource**

Holy Discontentment: Lifting Your Voice for Effective Advocacy outlines the tools in the advocate's toolbox, discusses their effectiveness, and gives suggestions on truly effective advocacy strategies. Now, with a newly updated section on using social media as an advocacy tool!

To download go to: <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/holy-discontentment-advocacy-resource/>

### **Resources to Educate Your Congregations About Each Candidate**

WCHS Eyewitness News Lead Political Reporter Kennie Bass talking with the candidates for U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. Each segment is 15 minutes long. Each candidate is asked about some of the big issues for the upcoming November election.

You can find the interviews here: <http://www.wchstv.com/news/features/candidates/#.VBBsThbt13s>

## GUIDELINES FOR FAITHFUL AND RESPECTFUL DISCUSSION ON THE ISSUES

- **Realize** that the Holy Spirit is present and active in the conversation and has given each participant a part of the truth you are seeking to discern.
- **Follow the Golden Rule:** “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” - even when you disagree with them.
- **Listen** respectfully and carefully to others.
- **State what you think you heard** someone say and ask for clarification before responding, in an effort to be sure to understand each other.
- **Speak honestly** about your thoughts and feelings. Share personal experiences which help others to more fully understand your concerns and perspectives on the issues. Conversation can be passionate and still be respectful, civil and constructive.
- **Speak for yourself**, rather than as a member of a group. Use “I”-statements rather than “You”-statements.
- **Focus on** ideas and suggestions instead of questioning people’s motives, intelligence or Integrity.
- **Lift up** points of agreement as well as disagreement.
- **Create space** for everyone’s concerns to be spoken, even when they disagree.
- **Seek to stay in community with each other** even though the discussion may be vigorous and perhaps tense.
- **Keep an open mind and heart.** You may not hear if you judge too quickly.
- **Pray** for God’s grace to listen attentively, to speak clearly and to remain open to the vision God holds for us all.

*[adapted from “Ground Rules for Conversation” (Evangelical Lutheran Church Department for Communication) and “Seeking to be Faithful Together” (adopted by the 204th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, USA)]*

## Ideas to Help Your Congregation Be Active Voters

### In Worship and in Church Education

- Address issue concerns in the worship life of the congregation, through prayers, sermons and Scripture
- Invite members of the congregation with various kinds of expertise to speak about the issues from their experience and perspective - for example, invite public school teachers to talk about public education issues or health care workers to talk about health care issues.
- Discuss the issues in light of scriptural teaching and the resolutions of the PCUSA General Assembly

### Congregational Education Activities

- Hold a candidate forum at your church
- Visit nonpartisan websites that provide issue background and candidate positions such as the League of Women Voters website
- Invite Sunday School children and youth to share their hopes and concerns on the issues
- Organize a group from your congregation to attend candidate events and town hall meetings — share your reflections with each other after the event. (You can bring a question or two with you in written form that you have prepared ahead of time.)
- Post issue education material on church bulletin boards and include information in your church’s newsletter
- Talk about the issues with family members and friends
- Place voter registration forms in programs and set a schedule for featuring information in bulletin inserts about the value of voting; registration; Early Voting times and locations; rides to the polls, etc.
- Organize a class before or after religious services about voting rights and voting. (Focus on how and why to vote, not who to vote for.)
- Ask parishioners to sign a pledge card saying they will vote and will take a friend with them. Collect the cards and have a committee help everyone fulfill their pledge.
- Appoint an outreach coordinator to organize phone calling, doorknocking or citizen-awareness events in nearby neighborhoods.
- Have a picnic or celebration at the church on a Saturday or Sunday when Early Voting sites are open, provide information on voting and organize transportation for people to vote: Souls to the Polls.

