

# LIFELINES

of

## LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Vol. 38, No. 11

Plano, Texas

November 2024

I am happy to say that in a week, the presidential election will be over. Let's hope the results of that election are reported in a timely manner and without contention! Since this is a timely topic, let me offer some Scriptural guidance on how Christians should think about elections and leaders and what temptations we should be careful to avoid.

### **You should vote**

The first temptation to be avoided is to sit this out. It was actually reported recently that something like 30-40 million Christians are not planning to vote in the upcoming election. This seems to be an abdication of one's civic duty. Some Christians would put it much stronger and call it immoral. Voting is both a privilege and a responsibility. We are blessed to have amazing freedoms in this country and we get to have a say in who will be our next leaders. Perhaps it is easy for a lot of people to sit back and say, "Don't blame me, I didn't vote for them!" Or, "Why bother?" But by not participating, you also make a choice; you choose to be irresponsible. Instead, Scripture directs us to honor our leaders and pray for them (1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:1-2). Ignoring them at the election, only to complain about them later, is not a faithful option.



### **A choice between sinners**

Perhaps the reason so many Christians make the choice to avoid the responsibility of voting, is that they do not like either candidate. Since Jesus is not running for office, our elections are always a choice between sinners. Rather than lament that no one is perfect, it seems we should try and elect the candidate and platform that most closely aligns with our Christian values and preserves freedom for Christians to serve and worship God. Determining which candidate will do that may not be simple. Candidates promise to do things and then break their promises, thus we must pay attention not only to what a candidate says, but what they do.

Another way to think through this is to think in terms of competence. Given that all candidates are imperfect and sinful, whom do you suspect will be the most competent

for the task? For example, if you needed heart surgery, would you refuse to be operated on by an adulterer or someone of another religion? What if that person was widely recognized as the top heart surgeon with outstanding ratings of success? Instead, would you choose the nicest most moral Christian man even though he has a bad record of losing patients? In the same way, which political candidate (despite moral or religious failings) will govern better and allow more peace and prosperity for the Church, the country, and the world?

### **Not falling into the 8<sup>th</sup> commandment trap**

One of the biggest reasons I cannot wait for the election to be over is all the rhetoric. If you are like me, you are burnt out and weary from the constant politicking –the back and forth muckraking and accusations. Our election cycles see people continuously slandered and denigrated, mocked and ridiculed. Yet God commands us not to bear false witness against our neighbor (**Exodus 20:16**). As Luther explained, that means we shall not tell lies, betray, or slander our neighbor; but in addition, we are to defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way. Thus, when we find ourselves in a context where so much mud is being slung all around us, it is good for us to avoid the following temptations:

- Hyper-criticism of the opposition. This can involve repeating every talking point without verification – anything so long as it is critical of the other guy. Consider that in Titus 3, Paul tells Titus to remind people to obey authorities and, in the same

breath, not to speak evil of anyone and avoid quarrels!

**Titus 3:** <sup>1</sup>Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, <sup>2</sup>to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.

- Blindness to the weaknesses of our team. This can involve dismissing criticism, or simply refusing to see it. Consider all the dangers that can result from blind admiration or allegiance to a leader. Ex: Do you think the German people who eagerly supported Hitler and helped elect him really understood what he was about and what he would do?

### **Trust not in princes**

Once the election has been decided, other temptations can kick in like despair in the case of defeat or false security in the case of victory. In **Psalms 146**, the psalmist writes:

<sup>3</sup>Put not your trust in princes,  
in a son of man, in whom there is  
no salvation.

<sup>4</sup>When his breath departs, he returns  
to the earth;  
on that very day his plans perish.

This Psalm warns that human leaders can only do so much and get you so far. Their reign and rule is often fleeting and unsatisfying. If your hope is in them, you will only be disappointed. Better instead is the one who places his trust in the Lord:

<sup>5</sup>Blessed is he whose help is the God  
of Jacob,  
whose hope is in the Lord his God,  
<sup>6</sup>who made heaven and earth,  
the sea, and all that is in them,

who keeps faith forever;  
<sup>7</sup> who executes justice for the  
 oppressed,  
 who gives food to the hungry.

A similar bit of wisdom is that Christians are not to be too caught up in the things of this world. We should remember that the God and Kingdom we belong to is far higher and longer-lasting than temporal governments.

**Philippians 3:** <sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

### Honor the king

Another post-election temptation to be avoided is constant grumbling about "*the idiots in charge*." This is especially the case if your preferred candidate doesn't win. But about this, let there be no denying, Christians are to honor and submit to the governing authorities.

**Romans 13:** <sup>1</sup> Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. <sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

**1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:** <sup>13</sup> Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, <sup>14</sup> or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. <sup>15</sup> For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. <sup>16</sup> Live as people who are free,

not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. <sup>17</sup> Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

Also, as mentioned earlier, we are to pray for them and this we will continue to do every Sunday morning, no matter which candidates God gives us.

**1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:** <sup>1</sup> First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, <sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

thank you

**Many thanks for the wonderful cards and presents I received from so many of you for Pastor Appreciation Month. I really appreciate the thoughtful words and gracious gifts. It truly is my privilege to serve.**

**Sincerely,  
 PrS**

## Pray for the nation

Here are some prayers for our nation from *Lutheran Service Book*:

*Eternal Lord, ruler of all, graciously regard those who have been set in positions of authority among us that, guided by Your Spirit, they may be high in purpose, wise in counsel, firm in good resolution, and unwavering in duty, that under them we may be governed quietly and peaceably; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*Lord, keep this nation under your care. Bless the leaders of our land that we may be a people at peace among ourselves and a blessing to the other nations of the earth. Grant that we may choose trustworthy leaders, contribute to wise decisions for the general welfare, and serve you faithfully in our generation, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

*O Merciful Father in heaven, from You comes all rule and authority over the nations of the world for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do well. Graciously regard Your servants, those who make, administer, and judge the laws of this nation, and look in mercy upon all the rulers of the earth. Grant that all who receive the sword as Your servants may bear it according to Your command. Enlighten and defend them, and grant them wisdom and understanding that under their peaceable governance Your people may be guarded and directed in righteousness, quietness, and unity. Protect and prolong their lives that we with them may show forth the praise of Your name; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*



**NOVEMBER**  
*Birthdays and Anniversaries*

- 1 Duncan Bennett
- 3 Jeff Loewecke
- 3 Sara Tweedie
- 6 Hannah Kade
- 9 Brooke Wilkerson
- 13 Ken Tabor
- 21 Stephani Cramer
- 21 Al Martin
- 22 Linda Delzer
- 24 Tom Ashburn
- 25 Melissa Kunschke
- 26 Evelyn Buckmeier
- 28 Russ Wilkerson
- 28 Al & Norma Martin (67)
- 30 Arlene McDuffee
- 30 Haley Moore
- 30 Arlene Munden



I thank  
my God  
every time  
I remember  
you.

Philippians 1:3, niv







## prepare for worship in november

### November 3: All Saints' Day

Texts: Rev. 7:(2-8) 9-17; 1 John 3:1-3; Matt. 5:1-12

Hymn of the Day: "For All the Saints," 677

### November 10: 25<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Texts: 1 Kings 17:8-16; Heb. 9:24-28; Mark 12:38-44

Hymn of the Day: "Lord of All Hopefulness," 738

### November 17: 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Texts: Dan. 12:1-3; Heb. 10:11-25; Mark 13:1-13

Hymn of the Day: "The Day Is Surely Drawing Near," 508

### November 24: Last Sunday of the Church Year

Texts: Is. 51:4-6 or Dan. 7:9-10, 13-14; Jude 20-25 or Rev. 1:4b-8; Mark 13:24-37 or John 18:33-37

Hymn of the Day: "Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending," 336

### November 27: Thanksgiving Eve, 7PM

Texts: Deut. 8:1-10; Phil. 4:6-20 or 1 Tim. 2:1-4; Luke 17:11-19

Hymn of the Day: "How Can I Thank You, Lord," 703

## Lord of Life Small Groups

### EPIC PARENTING

- † For 30ish couples with kids
- † For info contact Ben Scarth  
[BenjaminScarth@yahoo.com](mailto:BenjaminScarth@yahoo.com)
- † Usually meets one Sunday a month in the afternoon or evening

### FRUITS OF THE VINE CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Scott Peters at 972-898-3351 cell or [speters@planolutheran.com](mailto:speters@planolutheran.com)
- † Will meet Sat., November 16 at 6:30 PM for Bible study

### GOOD NEWS CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Mike Kunschke at (847) 951-6974
- † Will meet Sat., November 9 at 6:30 PM for Bible study

### COLLEGE GROUP

- † For students in college or recent grads
- † For info contact Pastor Shaltanis at [PastorShaltanis@yahoo.com](mailto:PastorShaltanis@yahoo.com)
- † Usually meets after the late service for lunch and Bible study





## A Letter from Our Deaconess Intern

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Many of you, like me, may be getting a bit tired of all the political talk, but like Pastor said in his article...we're in the home stretch! However, during the past few months – and possibly even for a few more after the ballots are counted – we've heard a lot of jargon regarding what we are to do (or not do) when it comes to political involvement. One hot-button term that you may have heard thrown around is "Christian Nationalism."

While patriotism, or love of one's country, is not a bad thing, it can be easily confused with nationalism, which is the belief that one's government should both "promote and protect a nation's cultural identity."<sup>1</sup> Followers of Christian Nationalism take this to another level, essentially claiming that it is the government's job to promote and protect the cultural identity of the United States – that if our "Christian heritage" is not kept sacred, then we will "lose our identity and our freedom if we do not preserve our cultural inheritance."<sup>2</sup>

So, what is the harm in Christian Nationalism? There are a few issues, the main one being that Christian Nationalism tends to conflate patriotism with faith in Christ. That, to be a "good Christian" is to be a "good American." By this standard, Christian Nationalists tend to view any American leader as a "good American," simply if he or she claims to be a follower of Christ – even if their actions or beliefs demonstrate otherwise. Likewise, they may also view anyone who is considered "patriotic" to automatically be a "good Christian." In reality, their "patriotic" actions and beliefs may demonstrate a hatred of people of other ethnicities, or even disregard for God's establishment of authority if that particular authority is opposed to their own Christian Nationalist beliefs. A Christian Nationalist's actions may very well be a better display of their discipleship for the State of their own political agenda, and less so for the Church. This skewed discipleship is often a result of a misunderstanding of the two realms.

From a Christian Nationalist perspective, the two realms are split between God's "good heavenly kingdom," and Satan's "evil earthly kingdom." In reality, God is in control of both this right-hand heavenly realm and this left-hand earthly realm. Both are a part of His creation, and as a result, we live and operate in both of these realms. It can be very easy for us to muddle the two together, thinking that our earthly laws and governments – or in the case of Christian Nationalism, our political opinions – are somehow explicitly mandated by God to be operated in a particular way. This can be a tough pill to swallow because, as William Cavanaugh states, while "...the discipline of the State seeks to create disciples of Leviathan, the discipline of the Church seeks to form disciples of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. For this reason, our discipline will more often resemble martyrdom than military victory."

Now, how do you know if someone is falling into the trap of Christian Nationalism? For Christian Nationalists, their identity of being a "good American" is tied to their identity of being a "good, patriotic Christian."<sup>3</sup> In reality, our identity as Christians should trump any other "identity" we hold. If the discipline of the Church forms us into disciples of Christ – the Prince of Peace – then we must give serious thought to what we say and do in the left-hand earthly realm. If our "victory" on a political front causes us to hurt our neighbor and act in un-Christ-like ways through violence, riots, or slander, then we are not disciples of Christ, but disciples of our own political agendas. So, if you are upholding your civic duties by voting in such a way that aligns with Scripture and trusting God over all else, then congratulations! You are not a Christian Nationalist, rather, you are being a follower of Christ by acting appropriately in both realms He has placed you in.

In Christ's love,  
Julie Baumann  
Deaconess Intern

<sup>1</sup> Paul D. Miller, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2021/february-web-only/what-is-christian-nationalism.html>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> A good, patriotic Christian...but "patriotic" so long as it swings toward one side of the political aisle.

# Teen Times

## “The Season of Giving Thanks”

November is such a great month. It makes us forget about those blistering days of 100 degree weather back in July and August, and even the 90 degree weather we had through the month of October with no rain! The colors of autumn begin to show up and everyone looks forward to some time off from work and school to celebrate Turkey Day! This in turn gets us in the mood for the Christmas season right around the corner. But before I get ahead of myself, let's keep our attention on this month and its importance. We all have hectic schedules that keep us hopping; school activities, sports, music lessons or practicing your instrument, dance, karate, scouts, perhaps a job a few nights a week, and of course, homework. In addition to all of the things we are involved in, myself included, the month of November includes the one day that our nation recognizes to stop, pause, and give thanks for the many blessings we have: Thanksgiving Day.

On this special day, we gather with family or friends to eat a big turkey dinner, relax, watch football on TV, take a nap, eat again, possibly play a fun group game, enjoy an outside activity if the weather is nice, and yes, eat some more. But the most important thing we do on that special day is to give thanks to God for his grace and goodness. If you consider it, we celebrate many Sundays in this same manner. There may not be turkey and dressing served every time, but we delight in family meals together, relax, watch sports or enjoy an outdoor activity, and spend time with each other. But before all of that happens, we recognize the many blessings God gives us in our Sunday morning worship services. We give Him thanks for the forgiveness of our sins, for the reading of Holy Scripture, and for receiving Christ's body and blood through Holy Communion. However, our gratitude should not be limited to one day a year or even one day a week. We should be thankful to God **EVERYDAY**; thankful for the things we take for granted: a roof over our head, clothes on our back, food on our table, freedom to enjoy them, and the ability to take our next breath until He calls us to heaven to be with him. Thanksgiving, or giving thanks, should be something we celebrate all the time, because God is Good!

Until next time,  
Scott Peters

P.S. This is a simple prayer of thanks that our family says at least once a week before mealtime in lieu of the common table prayer. I hope you will enjoy using it too!

*We thank you Lord for the food before us, for the shelter around us, for the family beside us, and for the love between us. In Jesus name, Amen.*

