

progressive
christians
uniting

see. pray. act.

Voting as an Act of Faith



Gathering Music

Welcome

Invocation/Call to Vote

Sing: "Deeper Love: a hymn"

Intro to *Deeper Love*

Message/Homily

Voting Ritual

Blessing/Charge

Optional:

Pass the Peace/Why I'm Voting

Post-service book sale and refreshments

A voting ritual resource of Progressive Christians Uniting

Invocation/Call to Vote

This may be done either as a solo prayer or as a responsive "call to vote."

Spirit of Love,

We gather today to commit ourselves to your ongoing work.

In a time of division and hate, help us be seeds for justice and reconciliation.

When others say there is nothing we can do, remind us of our responsibility as co-creators of your realm.

While many feel powerless, inspire us to vote with our ballots in ways that strengthen your vision for our world.

Embolden our witness, through our voting and solidarity with the oppressed.

Help us embody the way of compassion and justice, so that our values and actions may be one.

In your many names we pray, Amen.

Deeper Love: a hymn

For deeper love we share the bread
I won't be full till all are fed
Till every soul has home and bed
The rest of us can't move ahead

For deeper love we share the wine
I cannot taste the love divine
Till every soul has walked the line
And you've had yours like I've had mine

Now Mary sings her birthing song
Till every voice can sing along
And voices weak will rise up strong
Her choir is one where all belong

No one's saved till all are healed
As Jesus on the Mount revealed
Your life and mine forever sealed
Just like the lilies of the field

We follow where the Christ has led
To table that for all is spread
And no one's sitting at the head
But deeper love in wine and bread

Words: Jim Burklo

Tune: The Water is Wide (O Waly Waly)

Intro to *Deeper Love*

Deeper Love is the latest handbook produced by Progressive Christians Uniting offering faith-rooted language for progressive political and social action. It provides activists, lay and clergy people, politicians, campaigners, and organizers with inspiring rhetoric to advance social change, and insight about how to use it.

“We can and we must craft a fresh political rhetoric that flows from our shared spiritual experience of compassion, giving life and purpose to our democracy.”

Deeper Love offers advice on how to:

- 1) Creatively employ religious imagery and brief references to Bible stories, poetry, proverbs, and parables that express cross-cultural values of compassion.
- 2) Use religious and spiritual rhetoric in a positive and emotionally authentic way
- 3) Have simple answers when people ask you about your faith
- 4) Know enough about the Bible to know what’s not in it, and more.

It expresses how voting is a liturgical act. It’s a ritual expression of love for others when we vote for candidates and for ballot propositions that will assure the welfare of vulnerable fellow citizens. This event comes out of the development of that book, which will be available for purchase at the end of this event.

Message/Homily

A sermon, message, or homily by a minister is appropriate at this time. The following are themes that can be incorporated into a message on voting as an act of faith. Scriptures to consider are: Isaiah 1:17, Jeremiah 29:7, Micah 6:8, or Luke 4:18-19.

- 1) Voting is a spiritual practice, if it is done with compassionate intentions. It is a sacramental ritual that brings body and soul together, both to evoke and to express divine love.
- 2) The physical acts that are involved in voting—learning about the issues, talking with friends and neighbors about the candidates, going to the polls, filling out the ballot, turning it into the ballot box—solidify our spiritual commitment to love our neighbors as ourselves in serving the common good.
- 3) When we ritualize blessing the hands we'll use to mark our ballots, we are solidifying our commitment in a powerful way. We are making a promise to ourselves, our church, and each other that we actually will vote.
- 4) There is science behind this: social psychological research has demonstrated the effectiveness of this kind of commitment-making for helping us follow-through.
- 5) "Voting is irrational," writes Paul Woodruff, professor of philosophy at the University of Texas in Austin, in his book, *Reverence: Renewing a Forgotten Virtue*. We do not vote because we think our individual votes will change the course of an election. We vote to express our values. We vote to act out our belief in democratic principles that our voices matter as much as those of the rich and famous. We vote to make a statement of faith that our hands have been called to do God's work in the ballot booth and in our daily lives.

Message/Homily (continued)

6) Voting is a tithe and offering to build the kin-dom of God on earth. Faithfulness to this task requires effectiveness at it; charity isn't enough. *The total food aid provided to needy Americans by private charity amounts to 6% of all food aid provided by the US government.* (Source: Bread for the World—a Christian charity) To be effective at meeting the needs of our most vulnerable neighbors, near and far, we must vote for candidates who will use our taxes to provide for them what our market economy cannot.

7) Our churches serve as building-blocks of democracy: they are public gatherings where people encourage each other to be engaged in civic life. They uphold and reflect the values that motivate us to vote. Our congregations are forums in which people can openly discuss issues and candidates in an atmosphere of respect. In these ways, voting is integral to the life of faith.

Voting Ritual

A minister or event participant/lay leader may pray or say, either as is or altering into an extended prayer:

"Voting is an act of faith. Our votes are tithes and offerings for the common good of our neighbors near and far. When we vote for candidates and propositions that effectively benefit our most vulnerable neighbors, we follow the inspiration of the prophet Isaiah: "learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow." (Isaiah 1: 17) Studying the issues and candidates, and talking about our choices with friends and neighbors, becomes an act of prayer. We follow the admonition of the prophet Jeremiah: "seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare." (Jeremiah 29:7)

To vote is to follow the way of the prophet Micah, who asked: "what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8) To vote with intentions for compassion, peace, and social and environmental justice is to do the gospel work of Jesus, who said: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4: 18-19)

Through voting and the democratic process, we affirm our collective responsibility to each other. We help our communities when people are sick, hungry, oppressed, at risk, or lack jobs or education. Through voting, we are able to make positive changes together that go far beyond any acts of private charity we can offer. So let us pray: Spirit of Love, bless the hands we'll use to vote in the upcoming election. Guide our hearts to guide our minds to guide our hands to mark our ballots with the best choices we can make. May your kingdom, your divine commonwealth, of compassion and equity be more fully realized in this world. Amen."

Voting Ritual (continued)

Minister and/or lay leaders take positions at the front of the room, saying:

You are all invited to come forward. Present the hand you will use to mark your ballot in the upcoming election, that it may receive a blessing.

If desired, it is appropriate to have music playing through the blessing of hands.

Minister/lay leaders receive each attendee as they come forward, take their extended voting hand, and anoint the back of their hand. Rub a dab of olive or other light oil onto them, saying:

May the love of God guide your hand as you vote for the common good!

Alternatively, this can be done without oil, by holding the voting hand with both hands and giving the blessing:

May the love of God guide your hand as you vote for the common good!

Optional: Invitation to Passing the Peace/Why I'm Voting

After people have returned to their seats, minister/lay leader can say:

After receiving the blessing, I invite you to stay around and greet one another, sharing in one sentence why you plan to vote.

If Deeper Love will be available for sale and/or refreshments served, give instructions on where people can find these. Tables should be set up beforehand and ready to receive people post-service.

Blessing/Charge

Minister/lay leader may raise their hand towards those in attendance, saying:

As you go forth, remember your obligation to serve the common good. Protect the widow, the orphan, and the stranger. Your vote is a sacred trust given to you. It is not the only way you are called to be involved in your community. But it is a foundational step towards building the beloved community. Vote your conscience. Vote as you are called. Vote with the gospel of liberation and peace in your hearts. And may the God of freedom, of equality, and of peacemaking inspire you this day and forevermore. Amen.

Music

Optional: People greet one other, sharing why they intend to vote.