

Laity Minute November

We Methodists are good at all kinds of things. We are really good at making sure there's food involved in almost all our gatherings. We are good at mission work and welcoming guests into our church. We are good at singing the old hymns from the Cokesbury. You know what else Methodists are really good at doing? Voting.

It seems like every time I turn around I am voting on a church related matter. Last week, I voted on a slate of officers at the Conference UMW meeting. I voted on a budget at that same meeting. We vote in our local unit on many things like where to send money for missions. We vote at Administrative Council here in our own church. Methodists vote at Charge Conference, Annual Conference, the Southeastern Jurisdiction Conference, and the main General Conference. And, I still have a few more meetings in the future where I will be voting again. I'm pretty sure anyone who isn't Methodist think we sure love to vote. A lot.

Our denomination is set up in a way where all voices count. We gather in the name of faith and love to offer support to causes in which we believe. The Methodist church is organized as a connection and one which acknowledges all opinions. This has been true for generations even as our early United Methodist Women fought for the vote in the Suffrage Movement.

Speaking of voting, by the time you have read this, you will have probably had it up to your eyeballs with all the political ads. They are everywhere, aren't they? Whether on social media, the newspaper, radio, TV, yard signs, t-shirts, bumper stickers, or a billboard, you may be begging for election season to be over just to get rid of all the clutter. It is enough to give you a massive headache.

But, when we look past all this clutter, one can say voting is still a fundamental piece of our culture and democracy. And the Methodist Church is right in the thick of it all. In fact, the United Methodist Women advocate for voting rights protections and are actively working to ensure that every eligible voter can vote. (See recent UMW Faith Talks podcast or unitedmethodistwomen.org for more.)

Unfortunately, however, the political environment (including voting) can get downright mean. Candidates sling insults, social media gets full of vile stories and the list goes on and on. All of this can even cause some hard feelings between friends and family members. It is difficult, especially as people of faith, to watch it all occur.

But underneath all of the clutter and the negativity, we can find John Wesley. No, this isn't a candidate running for Congress. It is our founder, John Wesley. You see, he had some wisdom which may be helpful during electoral times. His wisdom is useful in anything from a local election to the next Administrative Council meeting, all the way to a national election. It may even be useful for the next time you vote at the next neighborhood board meeting about what flowers to plant next to the entrance sign.

The next time you vote, no matter what it is for or who it is for, keep John Wesley's words with you in your heart. You may even want to offer these words to others not just as encouragement to take part in democracy, but as a person of faith.

So, yes, maybe Methodists do love to vote. We also vote with love.

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“I met those of our society who had votes in the ensuing election, and advised them

1. To vote, without fee or reward, for the person they judged most worthy
2. To speak no evil of the person they voted against, and
3. To take care their spirits were not sharpened against those that voted on the other side.”

-John Wesley, Oct. 6, 1774



Peace!

Kelly