

Election-day communion and the sacrament of voting

By [Adam J. Copeland](#)

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This election cycle has included enough religion-related bickering for a lifetime of elections — there was “[Pulpit Freedom Sunday](#),” Mormon bashing, continued [ignorance](#) of President Obama’s Christian faith, and Billy Graham’s surprising [endorsement](#) of Mitt Romney ([orchestrated](#) by son Franklin?). Even though much election rancor softens after election day, our deep divisions do not simply disappear on November 7. We may take down our yard signs, but we will still be divided.

With this in mind, after I cast my vote, I plan to meet at the Lord’s Table to be reminded of greater priorities, repent of my sin, and be sent to embrace my faith’s higher calling. I look forward to participating in our local [Election Day Communion](#).

This is not to say voting is unimportant or unrelated to my Christian faith. Indeed, I see participation in public life for the public good as fundamental to Christian discipleship. A well-run government supports me in my call to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. Because of my Christian faith, I vote.

Voting is a civil sacrament and election day is our nation’s high holy day. Gathered together in our polling places, we cast ballots to affect ourselves and our neighbors. Though we may feel as if we share little more than a zip-code with the voters beside us, in truth we share that great American feast and celebration: the ballot box. November 6 is our festival day.

Of course, Mario Cuomo reminds us, “You campaign in poetry. You govern in prose.” The thrill of voting is all too quickly quashed by the choices before us. No elected official is without fault. No one fully lives up to the festal promise of election day. Our political system is deeply flawed. This election, more than any other, has reminded me how far we have to go.

And yet, the theologian John Calvin encouraged believers to “think most honorably” of those who govern them, arguing that the Biblical narrative does not treat officials as “a kind of necessary evil” but, instead, calls for citizens to have “esteem and reverence [for leaders] as ministers and representatives of God.”

On November 6, hundreds of Christian congregations will host Election Day Communion services. In all 50 states and in several countries, Christians will gather at the Lord's Table not despite our political differences, but emphasizing instead our one call to follow Jesus Christ.

According to the national event [website](#), "Election Day Communion began with a concern that Christians in the United States are being shaped more by the tactics and ideologies of political parties than by their identity in and allegiance to Jesus."

Though I deeply appreciate our political process, this I also know:

- Partisan politics separates us; Christ's table unites us.
- Divisions into red and blue, voter blocs and turn-out machines cheapen us; the Lord's Supper strengthens us.
- Yard signs, social media fights, and bumper stickers reduce us; in the bread and the wine Christ's love is multiplied beyond our understanding.

Celebrating voting and Communion on the same day? What a holy gift!

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