

Hi friends,

Before I remind you of a few important things happening this week at church, I wanted to address some questions that I, and other pastors in the community and state-wide, have been fielding. The questions revolve around the election that we are now just 11 days away from. Every election year around this time, will be people who implicitly or explicitly tell people, “the church is making its members vote for ‘such and such a candidate’”. In years past we have heard stories of random phone solicitors calling and saying they represent a candidate and that your church is telling you to vote for this candidate. If you receive such a call, or hear these kinds of messages, I want you all to know that they are not true. There are some congregations that align themselves with certain political parties or stances, but Kennewick First United Methodist is **NOT** one of them. Since its beginning, Kennewick First has had a membership that reflects various political parties, and our church has always encouraged its members to vote their conscience. The same holds true in this election. Our congregation, and the United Methodist Church throughout the United States, reflects the diverse political understandings of the nation. As your pastor, I reiterate that advise... please make sure you submit your ballot and vote within the next 11 days! AND as your Pastor, I want to encourage you to vote your conscience. I hope that what you believe to be true about God, about your relationship with God and your relationship with others, informs the vote that you cast.

There are two other things I want you to be aware of on this topic. When someone says “The United Methodist Church says...”, that statement is not entirely correct, unless the General Conference of the UMC (which happens every 4 years... usually) has voted and agreed on a statement, we do not speak as a single voice on many topics. I will often hear in news reports that the “UMC believes...”, but in reality, they are reporting on an influential pastor’s belief, or a church near Washington DC, or a large church with certain political clout. But if you hear “the UMC endorses this candidate” or “The UMC has told its members to vote for...”, it is simply not true.

The last thing I will say about this topic is: by federal law, as a non-profit organization we are not allowed to endorse or require our membership to vote in elections in a prescribed way. So, as your Pastor, I hope you hear my words when I encourage you to exercise your right to vote. It is something that should not be taken for granted, and a right that is the envy of most of the world! And I hope that your faith informs the ballot you cast before the November 3rd election.

**THIS SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25<sup>TH</sup>, WE WILL HAVE ANOTHER DRIVE IN WORSHIP SERVICE**. Because the weather has become a bit cooler, we will not be doing the outdoor seating area. So, there will only be reserved car parking spots. We have 35 parking spots available for you and your household to participate inside your car. If you would like to participate, just follow this link: <https://reopen.church/r/yYVuCLI4> and reserve your parking spot. Because of the way we are reserving spots by carload, when you register your spot, “**type 1**” when asked “How many will be attending?” Remember, we have very strict guidelines regarding how many we can put in our parking spots with social distancing, so when the spots are full, we can’t let anymore in, and you will have to park on the street or somewhere off property. If you are showing symptoms of

illness or getting out in public puts you at specific risks, please use your best judgment when deciding whether to sign up or not. The parking lot will open at 10 am. If you can't be there in person remember we are live streaming the service on our YouTube channel: at:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/PiratesoftheColumbia>.

**TRUNK OR TREAT IS HAPPENING THIS SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25TH FROM 4:30 – 6:30 PM!** We have been working hard to find ways to continue doing the events that have meant so much to us and to the community. The youth group has traditionally done a Halloween/harvest carnival at the end of October for kids in the church and surrounding community. This year the carnival won't be taking place, but the "Trunk-or-Treat" portion will. AND... the youth have invited the rest of the church to come out and make it a special event. The youth will be decorating 20 cars and there are 15 more spots for our church members to come and decorate their car and hand out (pre-packaged) candy to kids. If you would like to join the youth on this special fun night, just reserve your spot at <https://reopen.church/r/yYVuCL14>.

We are also asking for donations of candy, since we assume this year's participation will be heavier than usual. If you would like to donate a large "Costco sized" bag of candy or 3 regular "grocery store sized" bags, we will make sure that we get the candy passed out to kids who come and trunk or treat. Also, if you are decorating a car, we are asking that you bring at least a "Costco sized" bag of candy or 3 "grocery store sized" bags to hand out at your car.

**WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY.** Finally, a reminder that the Wednesday Morning Bible Study is happening via a Zoom meeting. If you would like to join us for a study on the book of Acts, sign in with this link (<https://greaternw.zoom.us/j/96778398043>. Meeting ID: 967 7839 8043), Wednesdays at 11 am!

### **MEMBERSHIP PRAYERS/JOYS**

Floyd Gustafson (husband of Louise) passed onto life eternal on Monday, October 10th, peacefully at home. He and Louise celebrated 70 years of marriage in June, he was 96. The family will not be having a service. Cards may be sent to Louise Gustafson 624 E. 36th Avenue, Kennewick, WA 99337.

On October 22nd at 7:41 am baby Buzzy Ray was born! He weighed 6 pounds and 6 ounces and is 19 inches long...he came 5 weeks early but is doing very well. Proud Mommy and Daddy are Kevin and Kara Alley and big sister Marley, Grandparents are Rick and Cindy Glazier, and Great Grandma is Karen Alley...plus many happy Aunts and Uncles! Cards may be sent to Kevin and Kara Alley 1810 W. 29th, Kennewick WA 99337.

Thanks Friends! See ya' Sunday ... well, you will see me. Now ... go wash your hands!

Pastor Mark