

January 10, 2021

Christian Responses to Toxic Politics and Violent Protest

On Wednesday we witnessed the repercussions of a long accumulation of divisiveness in our national life that captured some people's attention in a new way. The heartbreaking truth about Wednesday's violence at the Capitol Building is that it is a self-inflicted wound by Americans against Americans. It laid bare the reality that more and more of us have forfeited the benefits of rallying together when under threat, either through lack of interest or lack of ability, or both.

Sadly, the accumulation of negative experiences that so many people have had when engaging in political discourse has led them to avoid this realm altogether out of fear. And as increasing numbers of people have done that the public square has been ceded to the most strident and conflict-inciting voices. It doesn't have to be that way. But turning the tide requires people that would rather see hard-fought, but respectful politics and passionate, but peaceful protest instead of toxic politics and violent protest to engage in public discussion by modeling what they want.

This Sunday, the 10th, St. James and Trinity churches will hold a forum after worship where you can (re)discover the wisdom and resources of our faith and its traditions handed down through the generations for engaging with (loving) your fellow citizens (neighbors) in deeply honoring ways. This is not superficial niceness that withers in the face of hard differences and divergent interests. These are tools for persistent respectfulness of the dignity of every human being, not dependent on whether we agree with them or appreciate their attitude and actions, but because they are beloved of God. And it starts with seeking what is most important and precious to another person instead of complaining about what is wrong with them.

If you would like to participate in this forum please use the following link this **Sunday, January 10th, at 1 p.m.:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5059178787?pwd=bFAzWStNbHRiYkFsS3AzTG9tRE5XQT09>

We hope you can join the conversation.