

Pastor Appreciation Month: Promoting Unity

Rev. Ismael Ruiz-Millán



Dear friends in ministry,

As we approach this season of decision-making in our country, with the election just around the corner, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the deep responsibility we carry as clergy. These times can feel heavy, and the challenges facing our congregations and communities can weigh on our hearts. But please remember, you are not walking this path alone.

We, as the Cabinet and Conference staff, stand with you, offering our prayers, support, and resources to help you navigate these challenging days. Together, we seek to embody God's love and be exemplars of unity, grace, and civility in a world that often feels divided.

Bishop Shelton recently shared a message on Clergy Appreciation, highlighting the support available through the Clergy Health Initiative and other resources to help you stay healthy—mentally, physically, and spiritually. We want to continue building on that, reminding you that as you guide your congregations through this season, there are tools and people to support you along the way.

Leading up to the election, view and share a daily Prayer for Unity on social media or in the North Carolina Conference app.

We also want to make sure you are aware of the many resources available through our Conference for your care, rest, and renewal. Programs that focus on respite, renewal, and extended Sabbath—are there to help you find balance in the midst of your ministry. If you haven't already, I encourage you to explore these resources at Clergy Care: Rest, Renewal, and Respite, and consider how they might support you as you care for yourself and your well-being during this busy season.

Additionally, I encourage you to explore The Purple Church Initiative. This initiative provides resources to help churches foster a culture of respectful conversation in politically diverse congregations. It can be a valuable tool as you navigate conversations around the election, helping you model civility and unity within your congregations.

As we reflect on this election, it's crucial to remember that, above all, we are called to be a reflection of Christ's love—love that transcends the divisions of politics. We are called to be agents of peace and unity, to model what it means to respect one another, even when we disagree. In doing so, we can help our communities hold onto hope and stay rooted in their faith in God.

May we move forward together, in love, holding onto the truth that we are all part of God's kingdom. Let's continue to show the world what it looks like to be united in Christ, even in a polarized time.

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North Carolina Conference
The United Methodist Church

You are loved, you are appreciated, and we want to walk with you in this journey. Peace and grace.