

Monday Quotes



Grain

“You have scattered my sheep; you kept dispersing them, and you have not turned your attention to them. So I will turn my attention to you because of your evil deeds...I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing.”

Jeremiah 23:1-2b, 4

Field

“Part of being the church for the sake of the world... is to encourage and advocate for fair elections and the right to vote. North Carolina where I pastor and serve on synod staff is a state infamous nationwide for voter suppression controversies. These include gerrymandering, the manipulation of boundaries so as to favor one party or class ... As Christians and as Lutherans, we have a responsibility to combat the sin of systemic racism and to advocate for fair and accessible elections. – Rev. Athena C. Thomasson-Bless, *ELCA Social Justice and Advocacy Coordinator* [hyperlink here](#)

Thoughts by Rev. Mary Kay Baum, JD, Ridgeway, WI

The words of Jeremiah come to us when people are scattered from their homes due to leaders putting personal gain over the public good. The shepherds in Jeremiah’s time were appointed to care for a flock entrusted to them. The text puts the political leaders (kings) in the role shepherds – either good or bad shepherds. Today in Wisconsin, political leaders often care for their constituents. But gerrymandering can turn this around. Packing and cracking schemes split up electoral lines for partisan political gain. Partisan leaders end up choosing their constituents, making it less likely for some voters to be heard and represented. Jeremiah closes with words of a new day, where community will thrive. They will not be lost in some food desert, but surrounded with community gardens, farmers’ markets and meals on wheels. “I will place shepherds over them...,” wrote Jeremiah.

On July 1, 2021 the majority of the Supreme Court ruled Arizona could continue to throw out thousands of absentee ballots that were delivered to the wrong precinct, when Arizona more frequently changed precinct assignments in areas with large minority populations. Also the court upheld the restriction that only immediate family or guardians could pick up and deliver absentee ballots. The Navajo Nation filed as "friend of the court" to end these restrictions on so many living long distances from polling places and without residential mail service or transportation.

Justice Kagan dissented: “The Voting Rights Act of 1965...still has much to do... when too many states ... are restricting access to voting in ways that will predictably deprive members of minority groups of equal access to the ballot box...that law, of all laws, should not be diminished by this court.” In 2019, in cases on partisan redistricting (forcing withdrawal of Wisconsin’s egregious gerrymandering case) Kagan also dissented, “Partisan gerrymanders here debased and dishonored our democracy...” *

“The practices challenged in these cases imperil our system of government. Part of the Court’s role is to defend its foundations. None is more important than free and fair elections.” The remedy is to pass nationwide laws that are clearer such as those waiting in the Senate right now. As a public church, let us lift our voices to call for fairness. Happy Monday!

Share

Send any quotes you'd like to share with our network to cindyc@loppw.org

For all reflections go [Here](#).

Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Mary Kay Baum