

Faith in Action: Public Life and Politics
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Seymour Indiana
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Overview: With 2020 being an election year, political messages increasingly compete for our attention and try to influence our decisions. This class will study issues that are being debated in our nation that are worth every Christian's time to understand. We will seek to apply appropriate wisdom from God's Word, which can help us get to the heart of current problems and make good decisions about them. We will also examine how Christians can provide leadership in what takes place in public life, rather than merely reacting to events and trends. What risks does this mean for our faith?

1. Topics We Plan to Address:

- Politics, public life, and the place of religious convictions
- Two Kingdoms, one king: distinction of church and state
- Culture, politics, and religion: who is influencing who?
- Voting: privilege or duty? The roles of conscience, principle, and party
- The changing definitions of sex and gender; how do we respond?
- Racism and justice: what does the Bible say?
- Violence, law, policing, and enforcement in perspective
- Equal opportunity or equal outcome: what is the American promise?
- Forms of government and their pros and cons
- Economic systems and their pros and cons, from capitalism to socialism
- "Green" issues: how do we address or lead in environmental matters?
- Truth and narrative: how do we know the difference, and does it matter?
- Reacting or influencing? Christians, culture, and public life

2. Getting Started: What do we Mean?

Politics: It comes from the Greek word "*polis*," which means "city." Politics is about governance of citizens in a city or state or nation. Politicians are those who hold offices in such governments or seek them. The word **police** also comes from that word—it describes those charged with keeping order and investigating crimes. Is politics an honorable vocation for a Christian?

What about political parties?

What limits are there on churches addressing politics? Why?

What limits are there on Christians addressing politics? Why?

Public Life: "Public" comes from the Latin word "*populus*," meaning the people as a whole. When describing buildings or workers, it means those funded by the people as a group, as compared to private enterprises and buildings.

Faith: While people in our nation believe lots of different things, we will look specifically at how the Christian faith influences our actions. This faith includes:

That we believe in the Triune God

What we believe about God, people, life, purpose, and many other things based on the Bible

3. **Faith: Personal, Public, Private, or?**

Read Genesis 41:41-52 (p. 44)

Does God care about all people and all needs?

How did Joseph's faith influence his work in governing?

Read Titus 3:1-2 (1272)

How should our faith be evident by those who observe us?

Why?

Read Daniel 1:1-10 (933)

Was Daniel's faith *private* or *public*?

What was the result of standing for his convictions?

Read 1 Timothy 1:1-4 (1262)

What are at least two reasons for us to pray for those who govern?

Read Matthew 5:13-16 (1029)

How is faith seen?

What is the ultimate result of living out our faith?

*The Christian faith is **personal** in that each person believes for himself/herself and faith makes our personal identity to be a known, beloved child of God. However, it is more than a **private** opinion or conviction. The Christian faith engages all of our life and gives us a perspective on **public life and politics** that will otherwise not be represented.*

- **Next week:** Two Kingdoms, one king: distinction of church and state