

Intergenerational Conversation Starter

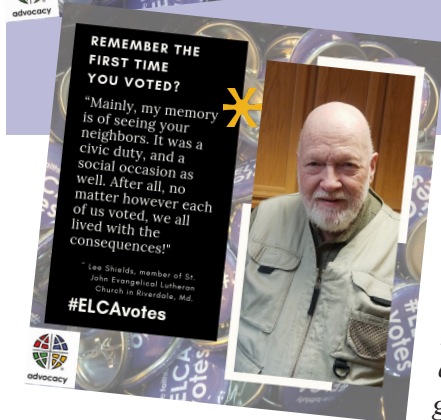
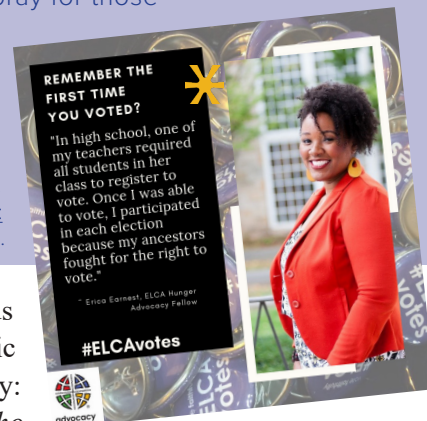
ELCAvotes



Election cycle buzz reaches us all – be it through Instagram feeds, nightly network news, grocery shop banter or other encounter. But does this aspect of our communal life get checked at the door when we step into church?

“This church teaches that civic engagement is a vital aspect of discipleship for baptized Christians. We have a responsibility not only to fulfill our private roles and functions in life, and to pray for those in authority (1 Timothy 2:1-2), but also to be civically engaged. We do so to act against destructive consequences but also for fair and compassionate governance.”

- From the ELCA social message “[Government and Civic Engagement in the United States: Discipleship in a Democracy](#),” p. 15.



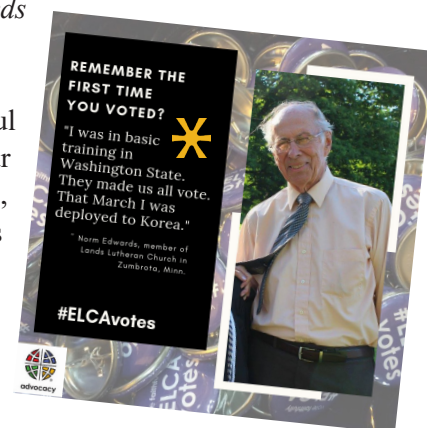
Civic engagement is pulled into focus in an ELCA Study Curriculum on Civic Life and Faith ([Session 1](#), p. 2) this way: *We are disciples of Jesus Christ who [in the United States] happen to live in a democracy, although God’s people have lived under every kind of government. Whatever the type, followers of Christ have had to figure out how to serve God, our highest authority, within that society. Being civically*

engaged is vital for disciples because through government many of the needs of our neighbors are met—or ignored.

A simple conversation starter can help elicit in this election cycle fruitful stories of what civic engagement looks like for each of us informed by our faith. Between teens and elders, over coffee, as an ice breaker in a meeting, or other ways you think of – give these questions a try.



- What was it like the first time you voted?
- How has your faith impacted your voting choices?



We aren’t all the same. “As members of the ELCA and as residents of this nation we will have serious disagreements about specific policy choices regarding what government should do or not do,” notes the government and civic engagement social message (p. 17). Yet we do not disagree about our shared responsibility to seek the common good.

“This church also strongly affirms voting, guided by faith-based values, as an exercise in citizenship.”

- Government and civic engagement social message, p. 16.

Have fun getting the conversation started!