

To Bishop Jeffrey N. Leath, Presiding Prelate of the Thirteenth Episcopal District, Dr. Susan Leath, Episcopal Supervisor of Missions, Presiding Elder Linda Thomas-Martin, Presiding Elder C. Robert Finch, Host Presiding Elder, Rev. Walter Henry, Host Pastor, ministers, delegates, missionaries, laymen, youth, members and friends of the 144th Session of the West Tennessee Annual Conference,

We greet you in the name of Him who is risen, righteous, reigning and returning, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

As we stand upon the precipice of a new day in our political spectrum and discourse, we conclude, by the disregard for basic human decency, that we as a nation are in the midst of demonically troubled waters. Whether it be the separation of children from their families at our borders, the lack of healthcare provision for all citizens, the disregard for black and brown lives by some who are called to serve and protect, the perpetuation of systemic oppression through an antiquated and unjust criminal justice system, the degutting of public education and correlative programming, the implementation of political policies that decimate the poor and middle class, the perpetuation of hate based upon varying affiliations and orientations or the disrespect shown to the courageous victims of sexual abuse, America is yet wading in the poisonous pool of spiritual and moral degradation.

That being said, we applaud and thank God for those who are determined to stand for the cause of letting justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream! That applause begins, but certainly does not end, with the Council of Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, who on September 5<sup>th</sup> called together members of our great denomination, along with other historically Black denominations as well as a number of interested and concerned parties, to a “Call To Conscience-Day of Action” which incorporated training and strategic planning to address the previously mentioned ills of our communities and nation. On September 6<sup>th</sup>, there was a rally in Lafayette Park across the street from the White House. It was Sunday, September 2<sup>nd</sup> that was declared Social Justice Sunday to prepare for the upcoming events. A detailed report on the Call To Conscience activities and information will be shared in a separate report.

As we are now approaching the historically critical Mid-Term elections, the focus of this committee is and will be voting registration, education and motivation. As such, we recommend the following action items to be embraced by the West Tennessee Annual Conference:

- Join The Righteous Vote Initiative by texting VOTE to 228-466
- Connect with your local NAACP Chapters for a coordination of voting registration efforts
- Designate members of your congregation as political action committee responsible for providing the following:
  - Voter Registration Dates
  - List of candidates and their platforms
  - Identification of voting precincts
  - Provide names of their local representatives
  - Provide other information that will appear on the ballot
- Be aware of other grass-root organizations that are working on similar issues and connect with them
- Host community forums
- Invite voter registration organizations into your congregation to speak to your membership

Beloved, with a dictatorial President who seems to believe that government works for him instead of the people of this nation and a Supreme Court nominee that is being pushed down the collective throats of this nation, we cannot afford to sit this election out. Remember, to not vote is a vote for all that may be detrimental to your way of life. It is the recommendation of this committee to make every effort concerning voting registration, early voting and Election Day voting the number one priority, up to and beyond the mid-term elections.

Humbly Submitted,

The Social Action Committee of the West Tennessee Annual Conference

The Reverends Byron Moore, Colleen Gibson, Perry Herman, David Yancy, II, and Linda Evans, Sisters Joyce Weeks, Esther Thornton, Linda Pettigrew, Brothers Ardell Maddox, Lewis Hurd and Torrence Nelson.