

**July 4, 2021 Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Ranked Choice Voting**

**2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10**

<sup>1</sup>Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, and said, "Look, we are your bone and flesh. <sup>2</sup>For some time, while Saul was king over us, it was you who led out Israel and brought it in. The LORD said to you: It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you who shall be ruler over Israel." <sup>3</sup>So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel. <sup>4</sup>David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for forty years. <sup>5</sup>At Hebron he reigned over Judah for seven years and six months; and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah for thirty-three years.

<sup>9</sup>David occupied the stronghold, and named it the city of David. David built the city all around from the Millo inwards. <sup>10</sup>And David became greater and greater, for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God**

The great city that never sleeps, which might explain why none of it makes sense in Poughkeepsie, held a primary election recently. The next day the announced who won and who lost, but people had to wait for the true outcome. For the first time voters got to rank their choices from most favored to least favored to liquorish flavored. If enough second placers turn up then the outcome might just change. Being New York City the primary winners are shoe-ins for the general election. I do wish them well, but voting was already complicated enough in the US. We should be more like Russia or China where there is one name on the ballot and you better vote for it or someone will come to explain why your health depends on your vote.

Democracy creates a problem for the church. You see, we are not a democracy in here. Nobody voted for God, God is something of a divine right monarch who rules unchallenged. There is no Bonney Prince Charlie God stirring up the French to take the throne. We are told in some sources that there is a pretender for the job, namely Satan, angel of light, teacher's pet who failed in a takeover bid and has been nursing a grudge ever since. I suppose you could imagine a poll where you a vote for God is a vote for the status quo and Satan is the reform candidate. Us Presbyterians being of the

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Reformed branch of Christianity are seen by others as having voted for the other side, but none of this is up for election. Nobody asked you who should create the world and run it.

Yet, don't those other guys, always guys, vote for the Pope? Isn't there some electoral process involved in most churches? Well it crept in because we find it hard to hear God speaking from the throne of heaven. It may be poor acoustics or the sound of angel wings flapping that obscures what God says, but we sure have a hard time hearing. All the many denominations of Christianity alone have assured us that they have the best signal. Living here in Shawnee I can tell you a good signal is to be treasured.

Since we are under the mistaken notion that God is running for election each party presents God's platform, a manifesto that claims to be the Truth, ignore all others. Is it an act of grace that Shawnee on Delaware has but one church? Here in this happy place the Kingdom of God is the only item on the ballot. If you want to vote for another God you have to go down the road or up to Middle Smithfield. I sure hope God is amused by all our posing and campaigning because we simply do not listen; perhaps we cannot hear.

We miss that the most important election is who God selects. Instead of choosing the representation of God most suitable to us we really should be trying to get God's vote. There are some basic characteristics of God's favorite candidates. <sup>Micah 6:8</sup> "He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" I'm out to get God's vote – how about you?

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Does God use ranked choice voting? We have two Gospel passages that might cause you to wonder:

Mark 10: 17 As *Jesus* was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>18</sup> Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. <sup>19</sup> You know the commandments: "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother." <sup>20</sup> He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." <sup>21</sup> Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." <sup>22</sup> When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

We don't know if he got God's vote except that he went away. Did he decide to do what was necessary to win the election? Then we have a most shocking account of a lawyer looking for God's vote.

Luke 10:25 Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>26</sup> He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" <sup>27</sup> He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." <sup>28</sup> And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." <sup>29</sup> But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

How you answer that question is like the point in the debate where the candidate rises to victory or goes down in flaming defeat. As Thomas a Kempis wrote, "Homo proponit, sed Deus disponit," because he thought we could read Latin. In God's own language it's Humans propose, God disposes. We need to work to get out God's vote come resurrection day.

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**Closing Prayer:** Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ has taught us that what we do for the least of your children we do also for him. Give us the will to serve others as he was the servant of all, who gave up his life and died for us, but lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.