



August 11, 2025

Dear siblings in Christ,

When Jesus said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" in Matthew's Gospel, he was being political. When the early Church declared, "Jesus is Lord" instead of naming Caesar Lord, they were being political. When we pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God, we are being political. Pledging our allegiance to Christ is a political stance.

The Gospel is political, but it is neither red, nor blue. It is more powerful than any partisan talking point.

Last month, the IRS carved out an exemption in the Johnson Amendment. Since 1954, churches and other 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations have been prohibited from endorsing partisan candidates. As of last month, churches were granted permission by the IRS to ignore this prohibition in their communications, including preaching.

I urge the clergy and preachers of this diocese to avoid using the pulpits of our churches to endorse partisan candidates and political parties. It is my hope that our congregations are communities in which people of all political stripes can gather in prayer and worship, in which our shared identity in Christ transcends all earthly allegiances.

We do not place our hope in political candidates or political parties. We place our hope in Christ. Our pulpits do not stand for stump speeches; they stand for the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus.

Ultimately we are citizens of heaven. The Kingdom of God is a vision of justice, love, and mercy that no single party can ever fully represent, that challenges every convention of this mortal realm. Like those of the past, the partisan platforms of our times will eventually turn to dust and be forgotten. It is the Good News of God in Christ, our timeless message of a divine love that transcends every difference and distinction that has the power to transform this world.

Your companion in ministry,

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The Rt. Rev. Jeremiah D. Williamson

X Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany