

HOW WOULD JESUS VOTE?



At the beginning of Luke’s gospel, the occasion is recorded when Jesus addressed the congregation of the synagogue in his home town. Drawing in the words of the prophet Isaiah, he proclaimed the fulfilment of what many have come to call his ‘Nazareth Manifesto’. His vision of God’s Kingdom was one where poverty, injustice and oppression are acknowledged and addressed. Similar messages echoed decades earlier in the words with which his mother Mary responded to the news of his impending birth.

Our faith has clear political dimensions, for these are issues that cannot be addressed in isolation from those who hold authority and government in our world. In a few weeks’ time, we will be confronted by the manifestos of every political party, as they vie for our allegiance in the forthcoming General Election. No-one can be certain of how Jesus would vote, but we do have a responsibility to act as a Kingdom people as we engage in the emerging political debates.

The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) is a coalition of Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Churches that seeks to combine our shared resources to help local congregations embrace and understand key issues in society, to reflect on these in the light of our faith, and to give voice to our communities in the public sphere. Through Home Mission support, JPIT is able to resource churches in better understanding and engaging with the communities around them, giving practical and relevant expression to our Gospel message.

JPIT is hosting a national conference today, at which the new General Election resource **‘Love Your Neighbour – think, pray, vote’** will be launched. We are delighted to welcome as the speaker Archbishop Justin Welby. The words of Jesus to “love your neighbour” have been deliberately chosen to fly in the face of many political narratives that tend to appeal solely to our self-interest. This is just one dimension of the work that JPIT does in resourcing and representing local churches and Christian communities in public life.

Phil Jump



joint public issues team

Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Churches working together

Please pray:

- » For everyone involved in the JPIT conference, especially our main speaker, that it may be a fruitful and informative gathering.
- » For all those who are engaged in political life, especially those motivated by their Christian faith, that they may have the courage and wisdom to do what is truly right.
- » Together as a local church, and use the JPIT resource pack to consider how you can engage in, and respond to the ongoing political debate as the election campaign gathers momentum.
- » For your local representatives and politicians, irrespective of their party allegiances, that they might pursue truth, justice, peace and common good.