



THE CHURCH & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

A guided conversation amongst Christian Leaders in Boston

You're Invited To:

The Church and Civic Engagement Gathering
Tuesday October 8 | 5-9 pm
Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, Roxbury

Dear Christian Pastor or Leader,

“The entire law is summed up in a single command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out, or you will be destroyed by each other.” (Galatians 5:14-15)

We believe this is a kairos moment for the Christian Church. The political strife of the past decade has caused damage and distrust, compromising our witness and eroding our sense of belonging to one another. Many of us feel fatigue and frustration with the “us versus them” rhetoric that pits us against one another, often creating false dichotomies. Jesus Christ calls us to unity, yet we often see the “acts of the flesh” (Galatians 5:20)—hatred, discord, rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, and factions—or weariness giving way to hopelessness and apathy taking root in our hearts and minds. Where is the proactive expression of “fruit of the Spirit” to one another in this time of national tension: love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control? And, for those of us who are exhausted by the political system, may we remember Apostle Paul’s exhortation: “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9).

Now is the time for Christians to embody Christ’s call to peacemaking and love of neighbor, rather than mimicking the divisions in society. UniteBoston, alongside a diverse group of Christian institutions—including BMA TenPoint, the Massachusetts Council of Churches, the Emmanuel Gospel Center, Boston Collaborative, Hellenic College Holy Cross, the Fellowship of Haitian Pastors of New England, the Focolare Movement, and other local churches—invite you to join a gathering of local Christian pastors and institutional leaders. **Together, we will share our experiences, hopes, and fears about leading through this election year and beyond, offering a proactive alternative to the “us versus them” mentality.**

Grounded in our shared belovedness from God, Jesus's call to love our 'enemies' (Mt 5:44), and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we will engage in Reflective Structured Dialogue, a model developed by Cambridge's **Essential Partners**. This approach nurtures understanding and empathy across different perspectives and deep divides, avoiding the typical dynamics of polarized conversations.

Our hope for this gathering is to foster a different kind of conversation—one where we focus on *how we can engage with each other* over what we agree or disagree on, discussing our deeply-held values, formative experiences, and genuine hopes and fears. Though dialogues like this may be uncomfortable and challenging, they are essential for rebuilding trust and connection across our silos and for becoming the Beloved Community that Jesus calls us to be (John 17:20-24).

This gathering is for local Christian clergy, pastors and leaders in Greater Boston. Together, we hope to stand as a public witness to our churches and city, demonstrating that the Way of Jesus is to reconcile divides and seek the Imago Dei in all our neighbors across lines of difference. We will also share resources that can guide clergy in how to lead politically diverse communities with courage and peace.

Please save the date and plan to join us on **Tuesday October 8 from 5:00 to 9:00pm at the Bruce Bolling Municipal Building in Roxbury. Dinner will be served from 5:00 to 6:00pm**, followed by the conversation in small groups. [You can click on this link to learn more about the dialogue](#) and what to expect at the gathering. This is an invite-only event and space is limited; **please RSVP here to reserve your spot by Friday September 13. We understand this is a tight deadline but it is necessary so we can ensure the needed diversity within the small group conversations.**

At a time when so many are avoiding or turning toward hostility, we believe that Christians who walk in the way of Jesus as everyday peacemakers can shine brightly. We pray this gathering of Christian pastors and leaders is a small, humble start

Together, let us be builders of hope

In the Name of Jesus; to and through whom we all belong,
Rev. Kelly Fassett and Rev. Devlin Scott, **UniteBoston Staff**



Alongside the following sponsoring leaders and organizations:

Bethel AME Church

Ray and Gloria Hammond, Pastors

BMA TenPoint

Rev. David Wright, Executive Director

Boston Collaborative

Jua Robinson, Executive Director

CityChurch Boston

David W. Hill, Pastor

Emmanuel Gospel Center

Stacie Mickelson, Executive Director

Fellowship of Haitian Evangelical Pastors of New England

Jean Marie Clerveau, Executive Director

Varne Antoine, project director for the Rising Voices Initiative

Focolare Movement

Mike James, Julie James, and Alba Doto, Coordinating Committee Leaders

Hellenic College Holy Cross

Fr. John Chryssavgis, Executive Director of the Huffington Ecumenical Institute

Fr. Luke A. Veronis, Director for the Missions Institute of Orthodoxy Christianity

Massachusetts Council of Churches

Rev. Laura Everett, Executive Director

Rev. Kenneth Young, Associate Director

New England District Church of the Nazarene

Rev. Dr. Jeremy D. Scott, Assistant District Superintendent for Church & Mission Engagement