

Good signs of the times

BY THE REV. DR. KHARMA R. AMOS

Spirit of Life

Here we are, fewer than 50 days from national elections — from the top of the presidential ticket to down-ballot races for the US Senate and House, to state legislative races, to small town elections that will determine everything from who sits on the town council to whether to approve bond issues directly affecting local life.

The polarized state of our nation and our own community could hardly be more obvious. One example is the proliferation of political signs in yards, on cars and in every single form of public communication known to humanity. It seems to be much easier to stake a sign in our yard or a slogan on our social media, than to engage in genuine dialogue (much less collaboration) with one another across our differences. That's a lamentable reality. (Incidentally, one we could change if we were so inclined.)

There is a different kind of sign appearing around our community, though. Have you noticed? These signs simply say: "Love, Peace, Justice – Together." They are a project of our local Brunswick Area Interfaith Council (BAIC), an organization that regularly convenes religious and community leaders to work for the greater common good. We know firsthand

that it is not only possible for people of differing opinions to work together, it actually improves upon what any one of us might do on our own.

All of the faith communities that are a part of the BAIC (and arguably, most spiritual traditions in general) share common values of love, peace and justice. We may talk about these things differently. We may illustrate them with unique stories, scriptures, or sources of wisdom. We may even disagree about how they ought to be embodied. However, when we get past all the sacred fluffery of our various traditions, these core values remain as clarion calls for our collective attention and engagement. These values also belong together, as many activists remind us: "No justice, no peace; no peace, no justice!" The same is true of the centrality of love's command.

We may not all believe, worship, pray, or think in the same way. However, all of us would benefit from regular and visible reminders to take these core values of our traditions more seriously. Over 15 individual faith communities in our area have signed on to promote and distribute these "Love, Peace, Justice – Together" signs. We also received support from the Town of Brunswick's Nathaniel Davis Fund. What a great example of

what is possible when we leave our silos and choose to come together for greater purpose!

No matter what happens in November, we are still going to need to work together to find and implement solutions for our common challenges. We will always need to work together. The stakes are really high this election. People all along the political spectrum think so. For the sake of all that is holy, please vote and encourage everyone you know to do the same. Let your values inform your civic engagement. And, let's really lean into the "Together" part of this message. We need one another. When we work together, we are stronger, wiser, and more able to do what needs to be done. If we want a less polarized, more cooperative vibe in our community, we are the only ones who will make it so. Of course, a sign project won't fix everything wrong in our society, to be sure. But, if we work together for love, peace, and justice ... we will be able to move forward with purpose.

(If you would like to purchase a sign or magnet (\$10 and \$5 respectively), please ask your faith community directly, or email brunswickareainterfaith@gmail.com.)

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