

A UCONN America: "Whatsoever is Pure"
A Pastoral Letter on Politics and Faith from David and Alida

A New York Post headline says it all: "New Yorkers Quit Political Bickering for Lent". A priest endorsed the idea, saying "This isn't a ceasefire. It's an opportunity for rebuilding and repairing relationships." At a time when Facebook friends are unfriended and family gatherings cancelled because of politics, we need a new way.

Maybe a UCONN America is worth considering. After 111 victories and 4 straight National Championships the Women's Basketball team at our University of Connecticut just lost. Or maybe they didn't.

America has always aspired to be the best. From the Puritans' vision of us as a "city on a hill" to "American exceptionalism" we have striven mightily. Bickering, demonizing, scapegoating are not striving.

In a world of sore losers and ugly winners, the UCONN Women have been graceful while dominant and gracious in defeat. They have pursued excellence and achieved greatness, and done it with class. Even the occasional loss is met with a wonderful combination of humility and strength.

There's nothing new about political conflict, even in the pews. But we don't need to mirror the spitefulness of the world.

We've been your pastors a long time, through Impeachment proceedings, 9/11, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, unemployment and recession. We've held special services about the ISIS murder of James Foley, racism, the Holocaust, violence by the police and against the police, the terrorist attack in Paris, and the horrors of Sandy Hook.

Through it all we have held together as a Church family. At Greenfield Hill Church we are that "city on a hill", described first not by the Puritans but by Jesus.

There's a Johnson Amendment that forbids clergy politicizing. Actually, we prefer the David and Alida Amendment. In the pulpit, leading our church, we aim for Philippians 4:8:

Whatsoever is true,
Whatsoever is noble and right,
Whatsoever is pure and lovely,
Whatsoever is admirable,
excellent, or praise worthy
think about such things.

Day by day that is Greenfield Hill Church. In our pursuit of "whatsoever is pure... true... admirable... right" we will have disagreements. But, as a friend said the other day, "If Christ is my center and your center it will all work out." As we seek what is "excellent... true... and lovely" let's do it with that center in place.

Maybe, like the UCONN Women, we can be a model for America staying true to the best within us, win or lose.

~ David and Alida