

FROM MUDSLINGING TO MUTUAL RESPECT: How To Make Politics More Civil

Featuring Keynote Speaker Senator George Mitchell

7:30am to 9:30am, October 20, 2016, Best Western Hotel, Waterville

As part of its ongoing commitment to promoting civility in politics, and in response to the disturbing vitriolic rhetoric pervading so much of public life today, the Maine Council of Churches will host an important election year event on Thursday, October 20, at the Best Western Hotel in Waterville featuring keynote speaker Senator George Mitchell. Doors will open at 7:30am for a continental breakfast, the program will begin promptly at 8:15am, and the event is free and open to the public. Space is limited, so advance registration is strongly recommended: go to www.mainecouncilofchurches.org and click on the photo of Senator Mitchell to reserve your seats.

The event, entitled *From Mudslinging to Mutual Respect: How to Make Politics More Civil*, will focus on what grassroots constituents and voters can do to support those candidates and elected officials who abide by the principles of civil discourse, and to hold accountable and change the behavior of those who do not. Senator Mitchell will reflect on these questions in light of his own experiences building bipartisan coalitions in the Senate from 1980 to 1994, and working for peace as U.S. Special Envoy to Northern Ireland (1995-2001) and to the Middle East (2009-2011). Throughout his extraordinary career the Senator has embodied a commitment to the principles of civil discourse and statesmanship, making him the ideal leader to speak about civility during this difficult time in our nation's political life.

As people of faith, the members of the Maine Council of Churches believe the obligation to show respect for others is rooted in the theological truth that all are created in the image of God. We take seriously the scriptural mandate to be "quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry" (James 1:19), and we seek to abide by Paul's guidance to the church at Ephesus: that no evil talk comes out of our mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that our words may give grace to those who hear (Ephesians 4:29). The October 20 event with Senator Mitchell will reflect these deeply held convictions.

www.mainecouncilofchurches.org contains more information about the Council's Civil Discourse programs (click on the "Programs" tab from the home page), including links to download Civil Discourse Covenants, one for use by political candidates, and another for use by individuals, churches, and other civic groups, and a Civil Discourse Resource Packet for clergy, local congregations and study groups that includes scripture, worship materials, adult education curricula, church school and youth group lesson plans, a bibliography, and a reproducible bulletin insert page.

