

Maine Council of Churches

*Inspiring
Peace,
Justice &
Compassion
through
collaborative
action*



Colin Woodard at First Parish Brunswick

Democracy In Crisis

More than 400 of you showed up!

On September 22, more than four hundred of you sat in pews where the likes of Joshua Chamberlain and Harriet Beecher Stowe sat during another turbulent time when our nation's future was unsure. **You listened as Maine author and historian Colin Woodard explained what has thrown our democracy into crisis once again and what you can do about it.**

He began by acknowledging there is a role for the church in this struggle: "I've come to appreciate that churches are a sort of civic association for the promulgation and expression of moral and ethical values -- for good or evil -- and that's pretty much the battlefield at this point. We're in the highest stakes



"MCC is among those on the right side of this fight for our democracy."

Colin Woodard

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How they've given to MCC

Margrethe and Bill Brown

Lives of service and a legacy of compassion

It took Bill just 78 hours after meeting Margrethe to know she was “the one.” How fitting, then, after a marriage that spanned seven decades, the couple died within 78 hours of each other—Bill on February 27 of this year, and Margrethe on March 2.



Both Margrethe and Bill Brown spent their lives in service to the church—Both were Presbyterian ministers—Margrethe was only the second woman in Ohio ordained by the PCUSA. Margrethe devoted her career to ecumenical and interfaith organizations, not only locally with MCC, but nationally and internationally.

Together, **Bill and Margrethe were faithful and generous for many years** in their support of MCC, both with their time and their treasure. So perhaps it shouldn't have come as a surprise that they even found a way to **express their firm belief in the power of faith community coalitions to create a better world by naming MCC in their wills.**

But it DID surprise us! In a wonderful, beautiful way.

To plant seeds even when you know you will not see the fruit they bear the way Margrethe and Bill have done with this gift, is an act of faith, love and hope. We will honor their legacy by carrying on a commitment to what they valued most: God's call to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly.

If Bill and Margrethe's foresight and generosity inspires you, **would you consider including MCC in your will?**

Your Values, Your Legacy

Consider Including MCC in Your Will

Planned giving helps you ensure a legacy of continuing to create a more just, compassionate, and peaceful world for years to come. There are also tax benefits for you and your family. Consult with your legal advisor, bank, or financial planner. Call us if we can help you with making decisions or provide more information at (207) 772-1918.

It's a belief, a faith, a moral commitment

Standing up for the rule of law

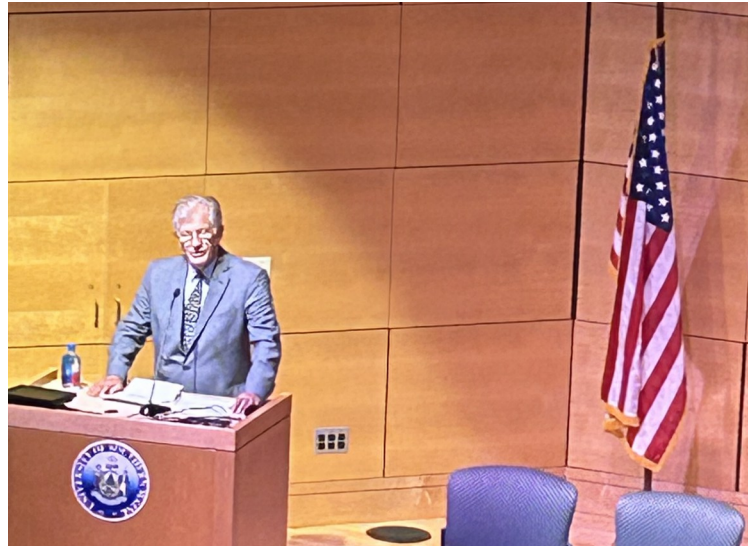
Forum at USM draws crowd of 450

Who would have guessed that a Harvard Law professor would explain the “rule of law” like this: “It’s a belief, a faith that human beings deserve to be treated equally. ...it’s a moral commitment” ?

But that’s exactly what Noah Feldman did at the **“Rule of Law” forum hosted by MCC, Maine ACLU and the Maine Bar Association at USM on October 14.** And it’s why these unlikely bedfellows came together to offer this lecture to the public. (It’s also because longtime MCC supporter Attorney Bill Harwood helped make the connection. Thanks, Bill!)

“Never in my 40 years as a practicing attorney have I ever seen the Maine Bar Association reach out to the Maine Council of Churches! But now they have. Because they recognize **the rule of law has a deeply moral component:** that we treat each other equally. We do to others what we would have them to do us. In other words, we love our neighbors as ourselves.”

*Mark Terison at Maine Conference
UCC Annual Meeting*



Professor Noah Feldman, Harvard Law School

Feldman concluded his remarks with a **“to-do” list for all of us who want to protect our democracy’s rule of law.**

- **Name it** out loud when the rule of law is not being followed.
- Be willing to **take risks** to protect it, including going to court.
- **Speak up.** Speak out. To family, friends, community, elected officials, social media. When the rule of law isn’t being followed, say, “This is not normal! These are not the rules and we don’t like it.”
- **Show that it matters to you** through your actions, especially by voting.

“You cannot have a successful democracy if people don’t care,” he concluded. “We are not used to getting upset about threats to the rule of law because it’s been 52 years since Watergate. The fate of our democracy is going to be determined over the next four years. **It’s within your power to participate actively in preserving the kind of society you want to live in. So do it.** And motivate the people around you to do it. Because it’s not over. Not even close to over. **Most people still believe the rule of law is our way of life. So let’s make it so.**”

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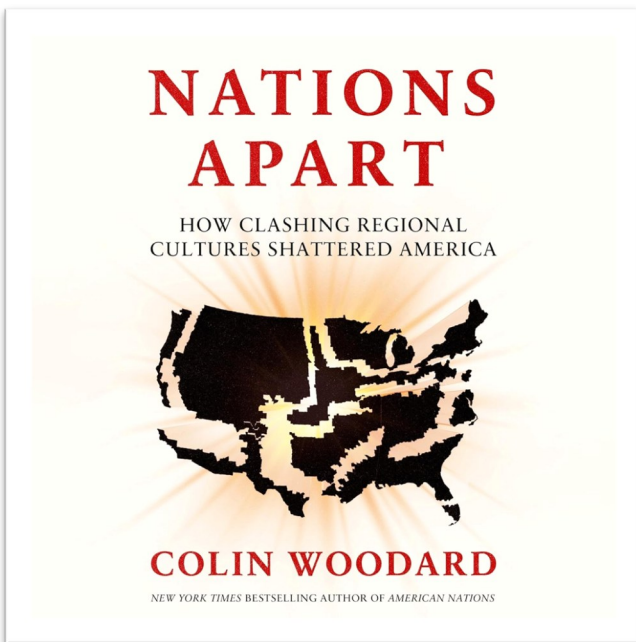
Democracy In Crisis Continued from cover

“The event was great! Turns out I sat alone but I did not feel alone. What a wonderful community!”

Carol Sipperly

battle for hearts and minds right now. While my kind of work engages the mind, it’s no match for those who engage the heart. And I believe the Maine Council of Churches is among those on the right side of this fight.”

During the Q&A you asked **amazing questions**—more than 40 of them! We collected and published them so everyone can use them for more conversation and inspiration (you can find them on our website at mainecouncilofchurches.org/2025/08/democracy-in-crisis/ **for digital version: click [HERE](#)**).



And when it was over those of you were so moved, you gave him a standing ovation.

Your extraordinary generosity, along with Colin’s, made this all possible. You inspired hundreds of us and reassured us that **we are not alone** in our passion for protecting and defending our democracy, our neighbors, and our freedom. Thank you!

(To learn more, be sure to read Colin Woodard’s new book, **Nations Apart: How clashing regional cultures shattered America**, released November 4, 2025)



MLK Day Breakfast, Monday, January 19

Breaking Chains, Building Bridges

Artists as Architects of the Beloved Community

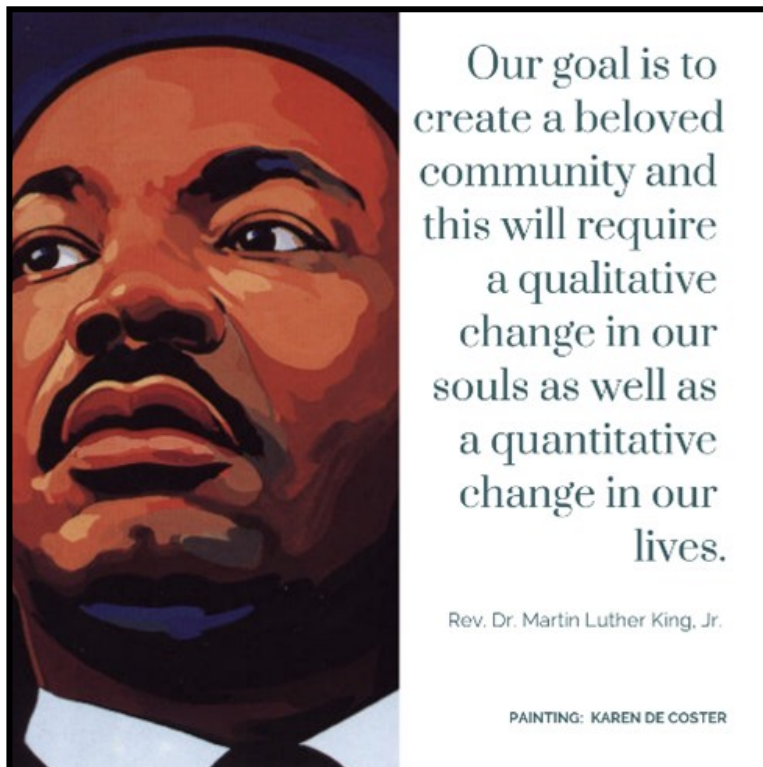
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., often spoke about his vision of the "beloved community," a society built on peace, justice, and equity, where love triumphs over hate.

Artists—painters, sculptors, musicians, photographers, writers, poets—are some of the most important architects of beloved community. They foster a sense of belonging, provide a universal language for connection and understanding, create beauty, and challenge people to find meaning and grow.

That's why this coming year we're joining with the Brunswick Area Interfaith Council and The BTS Center to host an MLK Day breakfast where we'll screen one of Dr. King's speeches and then hear from a dynamic panel of artist-activists who will explore how art can serve as a powerful tool for social justice and community building.

This inspiring and inclusive gathering at Brunswick United Methodist Church will honor Dr. King's legacy and amplify the voices of students, educators, community leaders, and all those invested in the struggle for equity and justice in our time.

Stay tuned in December for information on how to get your tickets.



There is no “us” without YOU!

Thank you for your gifts.

A list of the **more than 400 wonderful and amazing people, congregations, denominations, and organizations whose incredible generosity makes all this work possible** appears in the digital version of this newsletter which will be emailed as well as archived on our website.

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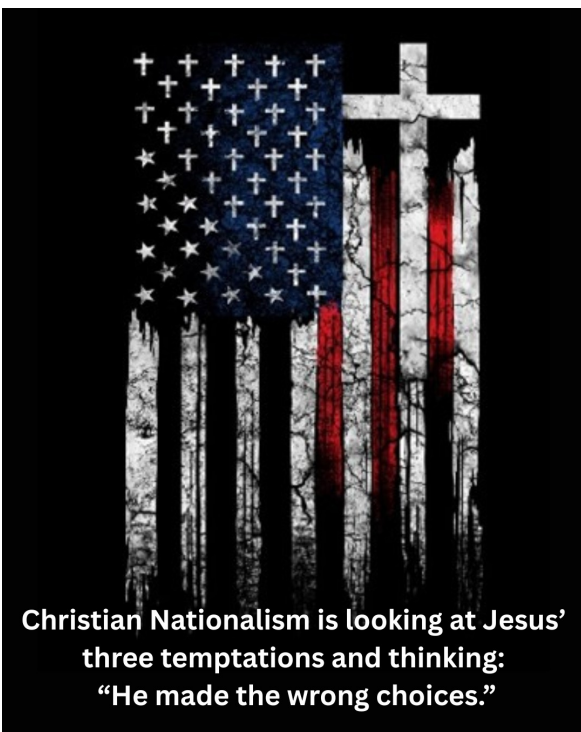
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YOU can help bring an important training to Maine

Democracy Not Theocracy

The Authoritarian Threat of “Christian” Nationalism



Did you know there's a direct link between authoritarianism and so-called “Christian” Nationalism? There is. And it's up to us to expose it and counteract it—for the good of our democracy and our faith.

That's why we'd like to bring the national organizations Interfaith Alliance and Faithful Democracy to Maine to lead a training that can equip all of us to speak and act with the moral clarity this moment demands.

Because you believe authoritarianism is a spiritual crisis and betrays the divine call to love, justice, and humility, can you make a gift today to help us make this training available to Mainers? You'll be glad you did—and so will we! (See envelope inside for three easy ways to give.)