FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2026
CONTACT: Azlan Ibrahim, aibrahim@byrumfisk.com

This election, churches speak up, engage and equip voters for civility at the polls

Faith leaders encourage civil communion, shared humanity, conflict deescalation

WATCH THE FULL NEWS CONFERENCE **HERE**

LANSING, Mich. – A week before Election Day, five major Christian denominations stood together on Tuesday, Oct. 27, in celebration of civility and highlighted resources from their churches that can provide facts about elections, promote peace at the polls and foster neighborliness among voters.

"Loving Your Neighbor This Election Season" is a project of **Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Episcopal Church, United Methodist Church**, **United Church of Christ** and **Presbyterian Church (USA).** Their leaders joined **Democracy Defense Foundation** Michigan board member, former Lt. Gov. **John Cherry,** in reminding Michiganders to vote. Michiganders are already casting their ballot by mail and through early voting ahead of Election Day, which is Tuesday, Nov. 3.

"As Christians, we are called to witness and uphold the teachings of Jesus Christ, which are founded on love, truth, justice and mercy," said Bishop **Julie Schneider-Thomas** of the **Evangelical Church of America North/West Lower Synod**. "Human dignity and the equality of all people under the law are core to our tradition, and that means upholding our democracy, exercising our right to vote and promoting civil public engagement. Loving our neighbor includes defending democratic systems and protecting every eligible voter's right to participate and be counted."

"Pastors in the Christian tradition remember Jesus's teaching in Matthew 25, to care for the hungry, thirsty, strangers, sick, naked, and in prison, and that's why within our churches, we are fostering a culture of civic engagement," said Rev. **Lillian Daniel,** Conference Minister, **Michigan Conference of the United Church of Christ**. "Faith is lived out through active participation in the local community. We are grateful to our community for the support they have given to each other during this election season, and to the elections workers and volunteers who support and uphold our democracy."

"As a person of faith, I couldn't agree more with the mission of the church to bring people together so we can see past our differences and embrace the things that we share in common," **Cherry** said. "The fact is, the people of Michigan have more in common with each other than we do differences, despite what the partisan operatives want us to believe. Our elections are run by local clerks in our villages, townships and cities who are also our neighbors, friends and family members, and this election is a great opportunity to exercise good neighborliness and compassion, as our faiths encourage us to do."

A recent DDP poll found that 75% of Michigan voters are confident that this year's election will be fair, secure and accurate, while an even bigger percentage, 87%, say they trust their local elections workers.

"This election season, my colleagues and I hear from members of our congregation who care very deeply about their vote," said Bishop **David Bard** of the Michigan Conference of the **United Methodist Church**. "In today's political climate, voters may feel conflicted about the choices they must make – and that feeling is perfectly normal. They may even feel like simply withdrawing, but that is not what we are called to do. As pastors, we encourage them to participate, and discern their choices thoughtfully and prayerfully."

"Loving Your Neighbor This Election Season" aims to promote love and compassion during the elections and help Michiganders experience voting as something that will be peaceful and convenient. Churches can help by:

- Helping eligible people register to vote and understand voting procedures.
- Providing trustworthy, nonpartisan election and issue information.
- Engaging people through community conversations and properly structured candidate forums.
- Mobilizing and pastoring to their congregations as they navigate disagreement faithfully. Personal attacks, hate speech, and dehumanization are inappropriate. They damage democratic dialogue and the work for the common good.

"We invite faith groups in communities across Michigan to reach out to us so we may work together and support voters in our congregations and our local neighborhoods," said Bishop **Bonnie Perry** of the **Episcopal Diocese of Michigan**. "Democracy and voting go hand in hand and help us participate in community building. So, the more people who vote will increase our chances of building a community that can better meet the needs of our families, neighbors and loved ones."

"Through our efforts, we, as faith leaders, can hopefully empower Michiganders to see voting as both an act of faith and a powerful way to love our neighbors" said Rev. **Kristin Stroble** with the staff of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan of the **Presbyterian Church (USA)**. "With love and compassion guiding us, we invite voters to join us, by thanking local clerks and their team of workers and volunteers, volunteering as poll workers in support of our local clerks and learning the facts about Michigan elections so we can share accurate, truthful information."

"As Christians, we will work with our neighbors for a peaceful election and an equally peaceful post-election period," Stroble said. "Whatever the results may be, we look forward to congratulating the winners with sincerity, comforting those who may fall short with compassion, and giving thanks for another secure, safe and accurate election in Michigan."

In addition to Cherry, other DDF board members are former Gov. **Jim Blanchard**, a Democrat; former Gov. **John Engler**, a Republican; and for U.S. Congressman **Mike Bishop**, a Republican.

###