

AColyte

Election Day 2016
A Journal of Faith, Doubt, and Other Things
at Austin College



TO DO LIST FOR WEDNESDAY NOV. 9:

*[G]et rid of...
anger, wrath, malice, slander,
and abusive language from your mouth.
[C]lothe yourselves with compassion, kindness,
humility, meekness, and patience.
Bear with one another and,
if anyone has a complaint against another,
forgive each other;
just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.
Above all, clothe yourselves with love,
which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*

--Colossians 3:8, 12-14.

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN...

Sherman, Texas

Home Town of Frances Eileen Hutt (1903-1970),

Wife of 1948 Republican Presidential Nominee

Thomas A. Dewey

November 8, 2016

*I used to be disgusted;
Now I try to be amused.*
--Elvis Costello

*I've lost count of the times I've given up on you
But you make such a beautiful wreck; you do.*
--Shawn Mullins

Ain't that America?
--John Mellencamp

Five blocks from Austin College...

a bunch of heroes and patriots are administering a very important election today.

There are several polling places in Sherman where local citizens are voting on this Election Day in national, state, and local elections.

But five blocks from Austin College, the 3-5 year-old students at the Fred Douglass Early Childhood Center are voting in their own election.

They're voting about whether they prefer cats or dogs.

Polls taken by enterprising students at the school last week indicate that the race will be very close.

Some analysts and pundits are speculating that a recent visit by the Sherman High School Bearcat mascot will lead to a feline triumph in today's contest.

The students at Fred Douglass are learning how to participate in elections.

They are learning about appropriate ways to act when your side wins.

And they are learning about appropriate ways to act when your side loses.

They are learning how to be citizens.

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Five blocks from Austin College...

The Fred Douglass Early Childhood Center opens its doors to pre-Kindergarten children every morning.

And all of the problems and promises of our entire community walk through those doors with them.

Hunger, disability, abuse, drugs, incarceration, guns, and domestic violence are relevant issues in the lives of some of those children.

Teachers, counselors, and administrators work hard to try to help each of those children and their families address those issues while they learn about the world and their place in it.

They are heroes and patriots.

It's often not pretty.

All kinds of things can and do wrong.

But those teachers, counselors, and administrators (as well as aides, coaches, nurses, custodians, and "grandmas") show up every day.

Heroes and patriots.

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Many of the Fred Douglass students participate in Head Start.

According to the Department of Health and Human Services website:

Head Start is a Federal program that promotes the school readiness of children from birth to age five from low-income families by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development. Head Start programs provide a learning environment that supports children's growth in many areas such as language, literacy, and social and emotional development. Head Start emphasizes the role of parents as their child's first and most important teacher. These programs help build relationships with families that support family well-being and many other important areas.

That happens five blocks from Austin College.

Every day.

As a nation, we try to do what we can for our fellow citizens who face particular difficulties.

Seriously.

Heroes and patriots.

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This year, one of the Fred Douglass Head Start classes includes two hearing-impaired students.

There is an ASL (American Sign Language) interpreter in the class who helps those students learn sign language as they participate in school activities with the rest of the students.

The ASL interpreter is paid with tax money.

That's more evidence that, as a community, we are committed to try and help fellow citizens face difficult circumstances.

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Recently, one of the other students in the class – a student who is not hearing-impaired – has been seen conversing, in sign language, with one of the hearing-impaired students.

Think about that for a minute.

The ASL interpreter focuses on the hearing-impaired students.

But this other student in this Head Start class has been paying attention and watching what was going on around her. She has recognized that different ones of her fellow students have different needs and different abilities.

She has recognized that different people need to be addressed differently.

Without any fanfare or particular attention given to her, she just figured it out.

Head Start, the Federal Government--the same government that Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump hope to lead--made the space for that to happen.

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I think that might be more significant than all the ink and hot air and bytes spent on private email accounts and "locker room talk."

The presidential election matters.

It's important because we're important and our neighbors are important.

But as you're thinking about what happens today – as you're processing the outcome of the Presidential election – remember that the things that will matter most tomorrow are the same things that mattered most yesterday.

As you get ready for tomorrow – the day after the election--I invite you to do 3 things today:

1. Listen to this song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gO-E7r9AKjc>

2. Think about Don Rodgers and what we all learned from him about being active, useful, thoughtful, intentional, responsible citizens; and
3. Remember that, five blocks from Austin College, Americans are doing what Americans do.

Until Next Time, I Remain,
Just Another Cowboy Preacher,
Singing the Star Spangled Banner with the Standers and the Kneelers,

JOHN WILLIAMS
Chaplain