

*My beloved had a vineyard
on a very fertile hill.
He dug it and cleared it of stones
and planted it with choice vines;
he built a watchtower in the midst of it
and hewed out a wine vat in it;
he expected it to yield grapes...
(from Isaiah, the "Song of the Vineyard")*

Last Friday, August 26, almost 5,000 farmworkers and their supporters arrived at the State Capitol to ask for one thing: Governor Newsom's signature on a bill (currently AB 2183) extending the voting rights that every California voter now enjoys to farmworker union elections. Although absentee, mail-in, and dropbox voting has been our public norm for decades, farmworker elections with respect to union representation have continuously been held at a farm, ranch, or workplace, often with little privacy or outside, impartial oversight. The result has been worker intimidation and threatened or actual deportation, for simply exercising a worker's right to vote for or against union representation.

While stating his support for farmworker rights, at this writing, Gov. Newsom has objected to what he believes are insufficient safeguards to insure a free and fair election. While he and our Legislators hopefully come to an agreement to sign an amended agreement guaranteeing free, fair, reliable, and safe elections, many farmworkers and their supporters now remain camped out at the Capitol, urging the bill's passage before the Sept. 1 legislature deadline.

The Episcopal Church has long stood in favor of free and fair elections nationwide, and continues to urge all Episcopalians to register, educate ourselves, and vote, especially in the November election. Important state and national legislation with respect to farmworker and immigrant health, safety, and human rights has also been endorsed and supported by our General Convention, and carried out ably by the Episcopal Office of Government Relations and the Episcopal Public Policy network.

What we can do: (1) Pray for and write/email Gov. Newsom and your Assembly member and Senator, urging them to resolve current election safeguard concerns so that those who work hard in triple-digit heat to put food on our table have the same rights to vote as the rest of us. (2) Join the hardworking Advocacy subcommittee of our diocesan Commission on

Intercultural Ministry through Miriam Casey at mlcasey7@yahoo.com

(3) Contact the Episcopal Office of Government Relations, and the Episcopal Public Policy Network regarding national legislation currently supported by past and present resolutions of our General Convention:

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/office-government-relations/>

And <https://www.facebook.com/TheEPPN/> (4) In cooperation with the Association of Episcopal Deacons (see EPPN facebook link above), make sure every eligible member of y/our congregation is registered and sufficiently informed about the several candidates and November ballot measures facing the electorate.

Thank you for considering this important appeal.
God's Blessings y La Paz de Cristo+
Rev. Grant Bakewell
St. Matthew's, Sacramento

Here are some photos:

Grant+ with St. Matthew's Banner Grant+ and Kathy Bolen, Trinity Cathedral
Supporters in front of the Capitol
Healthcare Workers Supporting
Pilgrims and Marchers arriving