Love Thy Neighbor

We are living in a stressful time in our country. We are in an election that pits brother against brother, friend against friend, sisters divided. Families walking on eggshells. I don't remember it ever being like this as a child. There were some who didn't like FDR, but their hostility was not carried out with yard signs and nasty comments although there was an attempted assassination of FDR. Truman was controversial but I liked the sign on his desk that said, "The Buck Stops Here." He was willing to take responsibility for his decisions and never denied them. One of those decisions was to use nuclear bombs to stop a war and save American lives. We can look at that decision in hindsight now but at the time when people were yearning for peace and a return home of sons, husbands, brothers, daughters, and all those who served it was seen in a light I hope we never have to face again. We have all voted for elections and lost and sometimes we have won but we accepted the rule of the majority and got on with our lives. I am an independent voter; I have at times voted a straight ticket but most often voted for the person and not the party. I have not consistently supported the same party. I have told my children, "I don't care who you vote for but never give up the right to vote." It is a right that was won by heroes from the Revolutionary War long ago and all the other wars since. Heroes whose names are etched on tombstones at Arlington, and a wall in D.C. and in every cemetery in our country. Heroes who never made it home from far off lands. Women who were beaten and jailed because they wanted the same right to vote as men. It is a fight that began hundreds of years ago to gain our freedom from foreign rule. Taxation without representation was a very real thing in this young nation. Most of us yearn to be a nation of peace. A place where we can go to a movie, a concert, where we can send our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren to school and expect them to come back home each day. I was reading an article that stated that we have become a nation of "What to do if you are involved in a shooting to a nation that needs to know "What to do when you are involved in a shooting." We have to return to a nation that cares about each other. A nation that knows what it means to Love thy neighbor and a country that knows everyone is our neighbor.

My country tis of thee, sweet land of liberty. Of thee I sing. Land where my father's died, Land of the Pilgrims pride, from every mountainside let freedom ring. My native country, thee, Land of the noble free, thy name I love. I love thy rocks and rills, thy woods and templed hills, my heart with rapture fills like that above. Let music swell the breeze, and ring from all the trees sweet freedoms song. Let mortal tongues awake, let all that breathe partake, let rocks their silence break, The sound prolong. Our Father's God to thee, author of liberty to thee we sing. Long may our land be bright with freedoms holy light, protect us by thy might, Great God our King.

By Samuel F. Smith

P.S. October is Pastor Appreciation Month. Our chance to show our Pastor praise and thanks for what he does for our church and for all of us.