

I remember when Halloween was the scariest night of the year. Now, it's Election night. In this current political climate, it seems like democracy is like three wolves and one sheep voting on what to have for supper.

“As we enter this week, and look toward Tuesday, when Americans will go to the polls to elect a new President, as well as to determine the make-up of both Houses of Congress, it’s worth reflecting on the importance of deep love and faith. Our nation is deeply divided. People have passionate feelings about the state of this country and about who should lead it. On November 9, nearly half of America’s citizens are going to be disappointed at the election results - some bitterly disappointed.

As Christians, how will we respond?

There has been tremendous anxiety and acrimony among us, even as church people. What will we do with next Wednesday?” <sup>1</sup>We will remember that we are Christians first—a saint chosen by God to be a healer and a reconciler—before we are a Hillary or Trump supporter. First, we are the people God has called us to be - the Church - *The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.* (Book of Common Prayer, p 855)

God is counting on us to be reconcilers and bridge builders and to participate in Jesus’ mission to pull down or dissolve whatever it is that separates us from him and from each other.

Our Bishop has called upon us to join in prayer for our nation and its healing next Wednesday and to pray for those who are elected, whether they received your vote or not. Most importantly, he is calling us to pray for our neighbors, especially those who are feeling frightened and disappointed about the election's outcome.

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<sup>1</sup> From Bishop Stokes’ letter to the diocese

To this end, we will open the doors of the church on Tuesday at the same time the polls are open: from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm. It will be open for quiet prayer. It will be open to everyone, regardless of whether or not they are voting for Trump or Hillary. It will be open so that we can put our trust in God and draw on his love and strength in order to love those who voted for the other candidate.

Then, on Wednesday night, when all the results are in, we will gather for prayer here at 7:30 pm. It will be a simple prayer of few words and lots of candles and space for our own silent prayers. We will pray for each other. We will pray for our nation. We will draw from God's grace to be reconcilers and healers in our world, wherever we are. We will pray for the courage and strength to heal our nation, so we can start right here in our own community and in our own families.

We are all the saints of God, and God is sending us out into the world to be a sign of God's love for everyone we meet. We are being called to become people of good will and hope. We are being sent out like lambs among wolves and we are being sent out with nothing but God's goodness and love. If we count on anything else but this, we will not have what it takes to face the fear and anxiety, the anger and the resentment. As Christians, we are called to listen to each other and to respond with compassion. What is it that the other person longs for? What is his or her deepest need and how can we respond to that?

We may NOT understand why anyone would vote for the other candidate, but we CAN stay in relationship with them and honor and respect them with the same honor and respect we would like to receive. This is hard, yet anything else will be our undoing as a people of God. If we are to find meaning in all of this, it may be in our ability to tap into God's energy of goodness and love for EVERYONE: the trump or Hillary supporter, included. We are the saints of God. The way forward is in claiming what that means for each of us and to live up to God's vision of who we are.  
AMEN+