



***Jesus said, “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)***

**Some post-election thoughts...**

**I don't know about you, but I'm exhausted. It started earlier this year and just got worse as the pandemic raged out of control and the presidential campaign got nastier. One of my favorite writers, Eddie Glaude Jr., observed that there has been no time for self-reflection, nor have we been given the appropriate and necessary emotional space to grieve the loss we feel, both individually and as a nation. One thing we could all hope for as the transition of leadership takes place is some time to step back and reclaim some semblance of our emotional well-being.**

**If this election revealed anything it is that we are a country that is more deeply divided than we could have ever imagined. And so each of us, and all of us together, have a lot of work to do because those divisions are clearly evident in our own congregation. People remain strong advocates of the candidates they supported, and continue to be passionate about the issues, viewpoints, and perspectives associated with them. As I traveled around, either by car or bike, I couldn't help but notice more political signs than in previous election cycles. Some houses were dressed up like it was Christmas. Social media was flooded with politically oriented posts. I promised myself not to get involved, but I confess I wasn't always successful, and then I was disappointed in my failure to remain disciplined. It was just too easy to get pulled into the fray. Unfortunately, people lost friends over this election.**

**As the results trickled in over the past several days, I found myself thinking back to 2009 when the ELCA narrowly adopted a new statement on human sexuality that would send shock waves across the Church. I remember Bishop Eaton's counsel to pastors and congregational leaders, reminding us that no matter how each of us might be feeling personally about the statement, there would be some people in our congregations that would be rejoicing while others would experience disappointment and anger. Some would express joy, while others would feel betrayed.**

**Her point was that we needed to be sensitive to one another, and to honor the feelings of those with opposing views. She reminded us that social statements do not define who we are, and that we could live together in the midst of the tension we were feeling, because ultimately we meet at the foot of the cross. Somewhere in there, she suggested, is an opportunity to witness to the community about what it means to be the body of Christ in the world.**

**It seems to me that it could be both appropriate and helpful to take that advice once again. As we move forward from election results that we either loved or didn't, it's important to keep in mind that either 70 million or 75 million people didn't vote for our preferred candidate. We've already heard a lot of talk about how it's time to heal the nation. We can do our part by intentionally listening to one another. It's important to get beyond the rhetoric and hyperbole and actually try to understand what the other is trying to say. It's time for the kind of respectful and dignified expressions of our thoughts and feelings that are befitting of a church community.**

**Let's remember that we are not defined primarily by our politics, but rather by our faith in Jesus Christ and his saving grace that is continually at work in our lives. We remain simultaneously saint and sinner, lost and found, convicted and forgiven. We are connected to one another not because we share a particular political perspective, but because we have all been baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

**That same Jesus once said to his disciples when they were exhausted and weary that they should come to him and find rest. Jesus is still there, beckoning us to him, and inviting us to lay our burdens down. Take a deep breath, First Church, steal a moment to rest in the abiding grace of Jesus. And then let's move toward each other with gentle and humble spirits.**

**Pastor Chuck**

**Let us pray. Good and gracious Lord, we pray for healing in our land. Where there is division, bring us together. Where there is disagreement, create opportunities for understanding. Where there is anger, bring peace. Where there is injustice bring mercy. Give rest to your people, and then send us into the world with a spirit of humility. Amen**