

2024 November 6

Dear Ones,

I am writing separately from tomorrow's *Keeping the Faith* in response to the outcome of the election, because I want to send a word of consolation and encouragement to the many of you whose reaction to the news is painful, worrisome, heartbreaking.

My first call as an ordained person began on September 9, 2001. Two days later, the world as we knew it was no more. I thought to myself, "I don't know how to be their pastor through this." Two years later, the US declared war on Iraq and again, I thought, I am not equipped for this." Again, in 2008 when the economy crashed, and 2020 when COVID hit. "*I don't know how to do this, God.*" My 22+ years as a priest has coincided with a number of significant challenges to our nation, every one of which seemed too big for me.

This morning I woke up, sat on the side of the bed, and said it again, "I can't do this, God. I don't know how. I'm not equipped." After a cry, a shower and a cup of coffee, I made my way to church.

And in the course of our discussion, I remembered something important. It is true, *I cannot do this.*

But together *we* will get through. We will love our neighbors. We will seek and serve Christ in all persons, respecting the dignity of every human being and strive for justice and peace. Remember the first of our baptismal vows:

Will you continue in the apostles teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers?

We get through it together.

Sunday morning was a glorious reminder that we are a community of faithful people doing our best to love each other as God loves us. More than one person today said that they are so grateful to be a part of Christ Church and take strength from the assurance that we are in this together. As you move through this week, I urge you to reach back to the joy of that day, remember the faces of our young people filled with the Spirit and ready to be beacons of light to the world. To quote our dear Sandy, "I refuse to let this thing take away my joy."

That doesn't mean you need to deny or rush through the pain, heartbreak, anger or fear. Just remember that they don't get the last word. Love does.

Light a candle of hope, to push back the darkness. Even if it feels like it's a tiny little flickering flame at the end of a very long dark road, it is there.

For now, I give the same advice I give to every person entering a season of grief: feel what you're feeling and be kind to yourself.

My deepest love in Christ,
Nancy+