CENTRAL
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
SINCE 1866 · ATLANTA, GA

November 7, 2026

Dear Central Community,

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ.

I invite you to join us this Sunday for our **Post-Election Worship Experiences** at **8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.** Together, we will gather to give thanks, to pray for our leaders, and to recommit ourselves to the work of justice, mercy, and faithful discipleship.

We will also welcome a special guest, **Congresswoman Nikema Williams**, who represents Georgia's 5th Congressional District, and whose family are proud members of Central United Methodist Church. We look forward to hearing a special address from her as we reflect on this historic week and consider what faithful citizenship looks like in the days ahead.

As we reflect on this historic election season, we want to offer our heartfelt thanks to God and to every person who exercised the sacred responsibility of voting. I have affirmed the belief of Rev. Dr. Senator Raphael Warnock who has said that “a vote is a type of prayer” for the kind of world we hope to create and the future we seek on behalf of our neighbors, our children, and generations to come.

This past week, Central had the privilege of witnessing that belief come to life through our children and youth. On November 1, they hosted a mock voting precinct as part of our Mock Election Day initiative. It was a wonderful opportunity to help voters become familiar with the voting process while also teaching our children the importance of civic participation. By educating our young people, we are helping to form future citizens who understand both their rights as citizens and their responsibilities as Christ-followers.

The election results announced on Tuesday were unlike anything Georgia, or any state in our nation's history, has ever witnessed. Georgia voters elected:

- Keisha Lance Bottoms, Governor
- Penny Brown Reynolds, Secretary of State
- Tanya Miller, Attorney General
- Lydia Powell, State School Superintendent

- Katherine Juhan-Arnold, Agriculture Commissioner
- Nikki Porcher, Labor Commissioner
- Keisha Sean Waites, Insurance Commissioner
- Sheila Edwards, Public Service Commissioner

For seven of these offices, this election marks the first time a Black woman has been elected in Georgia to serve in these roles. Governor-elect Keisha Lance Bottoms has also become the first Black woman ever elected governor in the United States.
This is a tremendous moment in the history of our state, and one in which we can all take pride.

Last Sunday, I preached a sermon entitled Politics.and.the.Black.Church, exploring the biblical witness for political engagement.

In the Book of Isaiah, we encounter a prophetic indictment of the religious and political leaders of Isaiah's day, including King Ahaz. In Isaiah 1, God expresses displeasure with the worship, sacrifices, and offerings of the people because they neglected the needs of the poor and oppressed. The prophet reminds us that authentic faith cannot be separated from the pursuit of justice that necessitates political engagement.

The church is called to engage politically because we cannot pursue justice for the oppressed without impacting the systems that shape people's lives. However, political involvement is not the same as partisanship. The church must never become the instrument of a political party or candidate. We do not endorse candidates, parties, or platforms. We proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and seek to apply its teachings to the challenges facing our communities.

The *Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* reminds us:
"Our involvement in political systems is rooted in the gospel imperative to love our neighbors, to do justice, and to care for the vulnerable. As United Methodists, we acknowledge that love requires responsible political action and engagement aimed at the betterment of society and the promotion of the common good."

It further states:
"While we do not believe churches should affiliate with particular political parties, we do encourage churches to speak out boldly on social issues from a gospel perspective. We

further believe churches have a right and a responsibility to educate and equip their members to be effective advocates for justice in the wider world."

For much of Georgia's history, Black people endured governance that too often ignored our needs, denied our dignity, and actively oppressed our communities. Our ancestors survived enslavement, institutional discrimination, lynchings, sexual violence, family separations, economic exploitation, disenfranchisement, and countless public humiliations. Yet they persevered with faith in God and confidence that a better day would come.

When we witness a moment such as this, where a Black woman will lead a state that once enslaved her people alongside seven other Black women holding statewide office, we recognize that history has turned a remarkable page. We do not place our faith in elected officials. Our faith belongs to God alone. Yet, we can still acknowledge God's movement through history, giving thanks for expanded opportunities, broader representation, and the bending of the moral arc toward justice.

Therefore, it is entirely appropriate for the Black Church to express gratitude to God in this season. It is appropriate to celebrate progress. It is appropriate to honor those who struggled and sacrificed before us. And it is appropriate to pray fervently for these women and for all who have been entrusted with public leadership, regardless of political party, that they may govern with wisdom, courage, humility, and a commitment to the common good.

I hope to see all of Central on Sunday at 8:45am and 11:00am!

May God continue to bless Georgia, bless our nation, and strengthen the Church for the work of justice and reconciliation.

May Goodness and Mercy Pursue You,

Rev. Dr. Brian A. Tillman
Senior Pastor