

Some of the candidates I voted for in last Tuesday's election won. Some of the candidates I voted for lost. It's been that way in every election I've participated in since I turned 18 and gained the right to vote. I imagine you've had the same experience. In fact I can't imagine anyone being so lucky or being so politically savvy that all the candidates they've ever voted for have won.

Regardless of how we feel about the results of any particular race, whether we voted for the winning candidate or not, I think we have certain responsibilities as we move ahead.

One, we need to pray for those who were elected to office and will serve our community, our state, and our nation. If the results of the last election proved anything, they proved that we live in a divided nation and in a divided state. At this point it looks like the winner of the popular vote in the presidential election will not receive the majority of electoral votes. That's happened four or five times in our country's history. The last time I looked more people had voted against the winning candidate for governor than had voted for him. Anyone who has been elected will find it difficult to govern. They need our prayers.

Second, we need to listen to one another but especially those we disagree with. While it may be helpful to seek out news sources other than the ones that support our own views so that we can expand our perspective, I'm talking more about listening to one another on an individual basis.

Certainly one way to interpret the results of the last election is to say that a lot of people seem to be angry. They're angry at the President. They're angry at Congress. They're angry at the direction our country seems to be going.

Another way to look at the results is to say that a lot of people seem to be afraid. They're afraid of losing everything they've worked for. They're afraid for their safety. They're afraid of what the future might hold for their children and grandchildren.

The church needs to be a safe space where we can talk about these things. It needs to be a safe space where we can have open and honest conversations about our hopes and our fears, about our dreams and our nightmares. It needs to be a safe space where Republicans and Democrats, Libertarians and Independents can come together and feel welcome, where we can worship together and study scripture together, where we can serve our neighbors and care for one another.

Finally, I think regardless of whether the candidates we voted for won or lost, we have work to do. Even if we might believe that the government has an active role to play in our society, it's not all up to the government. We have more responsibility than to simply wait around until the next election. We need to work so that we can have the kind of neighborhood, the kind of community, and the kind of church we want. That won't happen without our active participation, without going to meetings, without serving on committees, without speaking up as well as listening to those who have different ideas.

Regardless of whether we celebrated or mourned the result of any particular election, we have the opportunity to be the kind of people God wants, to shape the kind of church God wants, and to create the kind of community where everyone is welcome and everyone is safe. Our call to "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God" never changes and our opportunity to be good neighbors never ceases, no matter who is in office.