I'm writing this the day after the midterm elections. Results are still coming in from some areas, election officials still finalizing the tallies. That counting process takes more time than most of us realize.

One of the great strengths of our election process is the people behind the scenes who make it all work: not bureaucrats and political insiders, but ordinary citizens who staff polling stations and count (and recount) ballots by hand, working their stations for just a couple of days, maybe doing it a couple of times a year, for barely any compensation. Maybe you know people who have worked in these roles; maybe you've been in these roles yourself. Maybe you've been voting in the same location long enough that you've gotten to know the people who staff your polling place. They're your neighbors. They show up to do the work because they care about the efficacy and integrity of our elections. They want to be there; they want to help.

The church is much the same. It's made up of ordinary people, neighbors and families and friends, who want to be there and be part of shaping their community. People who care enough to spend their time and give their money and offer their expertise and their physical efforts to do the work that needs to be done.

We're not all going to agree always on how to do the work of the church. Just like voting in our elections, we each contribute our voices, and... sometimes things go the way we want, and sometimes they don't. The point isn't who wins, the point is that everyone participates and is heard.

You may be dancing with joy over the election results this week, or you may be disappointed or even angry. You may have mixed feelings. You may not have fully sorted through your thoughts and feelings yet. All of that's okay. The work of our civic life, and the work of the church, doesn't end with these decisions—it begins. Tomorrow we will get up, put one foot in front of the other, and keep trying to make the world a better place. So will our neighbors, so will our families, so will our friends.

And so will the Holy Spirit, moving among us all. We don't have to do any of this work alone. Thanks be to God!

Rev. Mary Nelson
Bridge Conference Minister | Florida Conference UCC
November 5, 2026