



Imagine Together

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This election year registered voters had the opportunity to take our values to the polls through early voting or election day voting. The election results tell us a lot about the true values of our neighbors. We are a nation divided by vastly different interpretations of what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

Key questions for all of us to ponder, pray about, discuss, and organize action around: What does it mean to follow Jesus and love your neighbor? Who is your neighbor? How will you love them?

In the gospels, Jesus teaches us to love our neighbors. Loving our neighbors includes loving those who do not vote like we do, who do not look like we do, who do not think like we do, who do not have the same religion as we do, who do not have the same culture as we do, and who do not have the same values that we do.

I know I have family members, neighbors across the street, and church members who did not vote the same as me. God calls us to continue to live a life of love, love of ourselves, love of our neighbors, and love of God. This is a high, holy, and difficult calling---yet this is what Jesus' life, death, and resurrection was all about--the heart of Christianity is love.

During this time of political and national change, we are invited to "Imagine Together" a world where God's love is generously shared with our neighbors.

The immigrant neighbor.
The refugee neighbor.
The transgender neighbor.
The single mother neighbor.

The widow neighbor.
The Black neighbor.
The Brown neighbor.
The disabled neighbor.

Imagine together a church that shares God's generous love, no matter what, to everyone, no matter who they are or where they are on life's journey.

Imagine a church shaped after the shape of Jesus' life: love.

This is bigger than politics or popular ideas or social movements. This is about our faith and belief in the teachings of Jesus Christ. This is about how our faith leads us to take action. Will we be people guided by our fears or people led by love?

UCC biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann shared these encouraging thoughts on November 7 in his blogpost "[Beyond a Fetal Position](#)" in the aftermath of the recent election.

"Like the ancient prophets, we are dispatched back to the good work entrusted to us.

This is the work of peace-making.

It is the work of truth-telling.

It is the work of justice-doing.

It is good work, but it requires our resolve to stay it, even in the face of the forces to the contrary that are sure to prevail for a season.

We are in it for the long run, even as the Holy One is in it for the very long haul, from everlasting to everlasting.

We do not ease off because it is hard.

We are back at it after the election."

I think of the courage, boldness, and tenacity of all of the (unnamed and named) women that followed Jesus. I think about the gospel story of the widow, recently included in the lectionary readings, who came before the rich and powerful people in the temple and gave her small offering.

Imagine together a church that faces the powerful and rich with the boldness and big heartedness of the widow. Imagine together a church that goes out into the world emboldened to share our gifts of

peacemaking, justice building, and compassion sharing.

God's love resurrected Jesus from the dead and God can use our love to bring about new life.

This is where our hope can be born again—from the generous and bold love of God.

Imagine together what is possible when we love without fear.

Prayer

God of Love, protect the most vulnerable in our communities from harm in body, mind, and spirit. Help our churches wisely use power and privilege to work for a just world for all. Create a fierce tenderness in our hearts so that we are open to love, no matter the cost. Amen.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Rev. Sarah Lund serves as the Minister for Disabilities and Mental Health Justice in the national setting of the United Church of Christ.

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