

More than most, this past week has been a mentally and emotionally heavy week. There are people in our lives, our circles, and in this community who find hope in last week's election. There are people in our lives, our circles, and in this community who are overcome with sadness and fear because of last week's election.

And you might say to me, "Kurt! Why are we talking politics in the church?" Well, from the very beginning, the church has been political, because the root of the word politics is polis, the city. Each church is embedded in a neighborhood, a society, a city; and the prophet Jeremiah teaches us to "seek the welfare of the city." What we are not is partisan, in that we don't institutionally endorse a particular candidate.

Like all of you, we have our personal views that cannot help but affect the ways we approach our lives and ministries, but let me be clear: the church is a place where we hold to the unity within diversity of the Body of Christ.

Regardless of who wins a presidential election, a state election, or a local election, the mission of the church and the mission of Zion does not change: Jesus calls us to protect the vulnerable. We will continue to feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit the sick, and welcome the stranger, because whatever we do for the least of these, we do for Jesus. We will continue to speak about the things that inspire and promote unity for all people, because all of humanity is created in God's image. And, we will focus and refocus on engaging with our neighbors near and far.

When Jesus is asked to summarize the entire Word of God, he does so with two commandments: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself. This is how we continue to build the kingdom of God—together.

And so, today is—by design—a special worship service. In addition to our Second Sunday anointing for healing, we have created space to be encouraged, challenged, and nourished by God's word, and by one another.