

BEYOND'S VALUES OF HOPE FOR POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT WITH NEIGHBORS

At Beyond Church, we believe that the gospel calls us to a higher form of engagement with our neighbors, especially in times of political tension. Rooted in the great commandment, *Love your neighbor as yourself*, our church's approach to political engagement is shaped by hope, not fear. Our shared faith in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ guides us.

As theologian Walter Brueggemann reminds us, "*Being unafraid is an odd vocation; but it is the vocation of all those who have been baptized.*" We embrace our identity in Christ by acting with love and courage, even in divisive political climates.

OUR STEPS OF HOPE FOR LOVING OTHERS:

- **Connection Before Conviction:** People don't care about what you believe until they first care about you. For others to care about what you have to say, they need to know you care for them. Build relationships before debating opinions.
- **Questions Open Doors:** Asking questions opens the door to understanding others. Listening before speaking creates space for deeper connection. *"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry"* (James 1:19).
- **Shift Blame from Issues to Attitudes:** Issues don't divide people; people do. It's often not the issues themselves, but the attitudes we carry, that create division. Anger and resentment only build walls. Let's focus on love over anger.
- **Pause, Verify, and Proceed:** Don't believe everything you read, especially online. From both sides of the aisle, misinformation is designed to drive division. Verify information and resist narratives that sow division.
- **Disagree Well:** Disagreeing doesn't mean disrespecting. You can be angry, but don't let it lead to contempt. Contempt cuts off relationships; anger can lead to deeper conversations if managed well. *"In your anger do not sin"* (Ephesians 4:26).

We know political seasons bring louder voices of division and fear, but at Beyond Church we choose to hear the gospel louder! Let's choose to be vibrant witnesses of hope, rooted in **gospel-love**, as we navigate conversations full of grace and truth (John 1:14). And watch God accomplish that which is beyond our imagination! (Ephesians 3:19-20)

In this together,

Beyond's Lead Team

