

## Vote, Pray, Love

### *1 Thessalonians 5: 12-22*

*<sup>12</sup>But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; <sup>13</sup>esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. <sup>14</sup>And we urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. <sup>15</sup>See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. <sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Do not despise the words of prophets, <sup>21</sup>but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.*

Today is the day to vote! If you have not already done so be sure to cast your vote today. I have both been looking forward to this day and dreading it at the same time. I have been looking forward to exercising my right to vote. I am also looking forward to no more mailers, political ads, texts, and phone calls telling me who I should vote for today. This day is filled with dread too for me. No matter what happens today, the other candidate and their supporters will be upset and angry. Our country is so divided that I fear for what tomorrow will bring.

At this point, I think it is a pretty good bet that we will not know the results of the presidential election for days, perhaps weeks. I fear that the not knowing will further ratchet up the tensions in our community and country. I invite you to join me in praying for our country. Let us pray for peace, for patience, and understanding. I am confident that God's love and grace will prevail. I am confident that the sun will come up tomorrow and the next day and the day after that.

Pray for peace that regardless of what happens in the presidential election that we will join as one united people and move forward. We may not like the results of the election and we do need to acknowledge the person who is elected. Pray for patience as the election authorities sort out the votes. It will take time to correctly count all the votes. I am certain that we all want the votes counted accurately. Finally, pray for understanding. We may not like the winner and we still need to support our country moving forward. It is okay to agree to disagree. As people who have been granted free will by our Creator, we will not all agree on everything. May we pray that we can respect each other even when we disagree and remember that we are all God's beloved children. It is possible to disagree with someone and still love and care for them.

Every one of us is a beloved child of God. God loves every one of us, unconditionally. Whatever differences we have, we are still loved and chosen by God. At the end of the day, God's love will prevail. Hold fast to that my brothers and sisters in Christ. We are one body in Christ, and we will move forward

one step at a time together. I pray that we do not allow our differences to harm each other. As Christians we are called to love God and love one another. May that be our guiding principle in the days and weeks to come.

As this election winds down and a winner is chosen may God's love and grace prevail. May we continue to love each other and pray without ceasing. No matter what happens today, the world will wake up tomorrow and we will still be God's beloved children. Thanks be to God!

In Peace,

Pastor Suzanne