

**All Saints Day
St James and Good Shepherd, Laconia, NH**

**The Rev. Dr. Janet Lombardo
November 3, 2024**

Well, it is almost here - Election Day 2024. I can't wait for it to be over, and yet I am fearful of it being finished. I want my people to win, as I am sure all of you want your people to win. I don't remember feeling this way about an election. I mean, in the past I typically wanted my candidate to win, but I believed that any candidate would be okay.

How did we get here? I think we have stopped communicating. You know the things you never talk about at a cocktail party - politics, religion and money. Maybe we have taken that too much to heart. On a recent trip we went with a group from NH, and we were told that politics and religion are not topics of conversation. Interesting, I thought, as I would rarely want to talk about either of those on vacation. Then I thought, religion, what could be controversial about that? I mean, do people really care if you are Catholic or Protestant or Jewish or Muslim or none of the above or something else entirely? It used to matter if you were Catholic or not, it used to matter if you were Christian or not, or if you were Swedish Lutheran or German! But nowadays, religion seems to be less and less a topic of conversation, maybe particularly here in New England, the most non-religious part of our country. Someone did try to talk to me about religion, but I quickly side-stepped that - after all, I was on vacation!

But politics is not something we can talk about unless we all agree. If we agree, we can have spirited and passionate conversations. We seem unable to have civil conversations about politics with those who think differently than we do. I have tried to do this and have been somewhat successful, if I remember that I am to listen. I truly believe that when we listen carefully, we will find common ground. But it is hard work. It is hard work to listen and search for common ground. Somehow, we forget that we all want to live our lives in similar ways, having freedom, having the ability to make our own decisions, the ability to speak our minds and the ability to live our lives in relative security, in the broadest sense. Now we may differ on how to accomplish this, but I do believe that our goals are similar. So how did we get

here, where both sides demonize the other, where both sides believe the other will destroy this country and all that we believe? We are afraid. Fear is a powerful emotion, and we can do crazy things when we feel afraid and threatened.

So, I am here this morning to remind you that God walks with us. That God is present with us in this place and in the life of our country. That societies have faced challenges throughout history and have adapted. That we the people have power, and we the people will figure this out. We should not be afraid to talk politics, in fact I believe we must start talking with each other, or more importantly listening to each other.

So first, you must vote. It is our responsibility to have our voices heard. Then no matter how the chips fall on Tuesday, we are in this together and we must build bridges. We must listen, we must be strong in our faith and trust that God has our back. That the spirit will work no matter the outcome, that the spirit will work all things to good. That our faith will hold us. That God will walk with us.

In our Gospel this morning, Martha and Mary lost all hope, their brother was dead, but Jesus showed them and us another way. That when things seem the bleakest, new light will shine, new life will begin. It is the essence of our beliefs, it is the foundation of our faith. So do not be afraid, do not be complacent, we must work together to find our common ground, working always for the common good, voting for those who will care for the least of us, no matter what party they may belong to. And as we heard in Revelation this morning, "See, I am making all things new." ... "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." ... "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end." Vote!

Amen