

**Proper 27B – Beacon of Hope
St James and Good Shepherd, Laconia, NH
The Rev Dr Janet Lombardo
November 10, 2024**

My dear friends, I have a confession to make to you. After looking at my phone on Wednesday morning, I have not watched the news since then. Nor have I read many news stories. I refuse to live my life in fear. Fear of ‘what if’, fear of ‘what’s next’. I do not wish to process why the election turned out the way it did, but to accept that the people have spoken. Whether I agree or disagree seems to me to be unimportant at this moment, because it is what it is. I am not saying that this is the best way to handle these things, it is just the way I am doing it this week, and maybe for the next 4 years. We will see.

As I said last Sunday, no matter what the outcome was in the wee hours of Wednesday morning, we will move on. We must, and God will be with us. God will lead us in this seemingly impossible situation to find new ways to be God in this place. To find new ways to care for all of God’s people and to love all of God’s people. To find new ways for the reds and blues to connect and work together for the good of all.

Now I am not so naïve as to believe this will be easy, or that it will happen soon, or even that it will happen at all, but we must work to build bridges and to care for one another in this uncertain time. Maybe the uncertainty is the hardest part, as we really don’t know what to expect. We may think we know, but we don’t. Things have a way of working out in unexpected ways, and this situation is no different.

I am sure you don’t have to look too hard in your life to find a situation that did not turn out as you hoped or as you expected. These things work both ways, sometimes things turn out worse than we thought, and sometimes better. But we are often surprised by

people stepping in where we did not think they could or would. So, I guess I am hopeful that things will turn out better than expected, but I am also realistic that it might be worse.

I refuse to live my life in fear.

So, I have a few options. I can trust in God and do everything that I can to help, or I can stick my head in the sand until it all goes away. At the moment, I seem to be surrounded by sand, but I have faith that that too will end, and that God will show us how we are to move forward in love and hope. After all, we are a resurrection people.

So, for those of you in despair, do not fear, and for those of you who are satisfied with how things went, there is still much work ahead. Leading this country is not a simple job, bringing people together will not be easy. It will take all of us working hard to protect the vulnerable and weak among us, to continue to make this country a beacon of hope and love throughout the world.

We can take our lessons from the gospels, always, and especially this morning. It is a poor, vulnerable woman who shows up all of those so full of their power. It is she that teaches the powerful that this is what sacrificial giving is about. That the least among us can teach the greatest among us how to live and serve God in this place, now and always.

So, my friends, do not lose heart. Maybe you want to move, like Ruth did in our readings. But I would say that we are needed here, that this is our time and our place to make a difference. This is our opportunity to stand for what we believe, accepting God's grace given to each of us, and the power we hold as people of God to walk in light and love. This is our opportunity to serve, so that we may be a beacon of hope and light to the world. Amen.