



No matter what the election outcome is, we fall and rise together

As I sit down to craft this contribution for Saturday's paper, it's election day and hours before the polls close. In the span of days between my writing and your reading, there's no telling what will have transpired. Will we have a clear winner? Will we still be waiting? It's anyone's guess right now.

As I write, I have no idea whether the candidate I voted for won or lost. Will I soon be cheering or will I be reaching for a box of tissues? Will I heave a sigh of relief or will I feel like the floor has dropped out from under me?

Since I can do nothing right now to hurry the clock, I find myself thinking about all the bumper stickers and yard signs I have seen for months now. To those whose candidate eventually wins, these expressions of allegiance will surely feel like badges of honor and points of pride. To those whose can-



Pastor's Perspective

By Rev. Karen Winkel

didate concedes, these relics may well feel like daggers or inspire refusal to call the winner "my president."

As much as I hope my candidate wins and as much as I want to celebrate with those who voted as I did, today, because time is moving so slowly and I'm left with my fantasies, I can't help but wonder if this kind of thinking isn't a dangerous indulgence ultimately. Because the simple truth is this: those who voted differently are still my brothers and sisters, fellow citizens upon whom I de-

pend. The world is simply too small now, the stakes far too high, to let myself lose track of the truth that if we rise, we rise together, and if we fall, we fall together. Said another way, thinking strictly in terms of winners and losers makes losers of us all.

In John's gospel, just before Jesus is handed over to the authorities, he makes a number of statements to help prepare his disciples for his inevitable absence. On Jesus' mind is concern that his trial and crucifixion not splinter this vulnerable group, ruining the good they could potentially do in his name. And so Jesus prays for them, and we eavesdrop as he does. He begs God to "make them one as we are one." Jesus asks that his friends experience the blessing of unity.

As he prays, Jesus trusts that beautiful and life-giving things will come from those who experience themselves

as belonging to one another. Jesus' hope for his disciples is much the same as the wisdom expressed in what was once our nation's motto: E pluribus unum — out of many, one.

As I watch the clock and await tonight's election coverage, I have to concede that as much as I want my candidate to win, nothing is gained if in the coming weeks, months and years I do not show respect for and affirm the humanity of those who voted differently. Their fate and mine are bound together in ways that cannot be denied. There is no moving forward as a community and nation if I refuse to love my neighbors, even those whose ballots looked entirely different than mine. Remembering that Jesus' prayer is always for unity but never for uniformity, I see that I have my work cut out for me. We all do.

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