

Dear friends,

Today, many of us feel shaken. For those who had hoped for a different vision of our shared future, these election results are painful. We find ourselves facing uncertain days ahead, and it's natural to feel fear when so much is at stake. Many of us are worried—not just for ourselves, but for those we love, and for our communities and our country. Our hearts ache for the America we hoped we were building.

As we hold this moment together, a timeless question invites us to center ourselves: **"Who do we choose to be?"** We may not be able to control the circumstances we're facing, but we do have power over our response, over the values we embody, and the spirit we bring to those around us. Now, more than ever, we're called to be people who answer hate with love, division with community, injustice with courage, and fear with truth. This isn't easy, but it's the work that people of faith and conviction have taken up for generations.

Recently, while visiting an observatory in Portugal, I found myself walking through a pitch-black field. It was so dark I couldn't see my hand in front of me. The astronomer leading us said, "Trust the darkness. With each step, your eyes will adjust, and more stars will appear." And as we walked, that's exactly what happened—each step brought more light, more clarity. But first, we had to trust enough to start walking.

I hold onto that lesson now. We may feel like we're stepping into the unknown, afraid of what lies ahead. But if we keep walking through this dark night together, we may create the possibility for generosity, compassion, and creativity to emerge between us and in our congregations. This is how we answer the question of who we will choose to be: by choosing loving community and connection, trusting that we are not alone.

Where to start?

**Daily Rituals for Grounding:** Small moments of reflection or prayer each day can help us process grief or fear, and remind us of our intentions.

**Connect with Community:** Reach out to others who share your values, and make a commitment to support one another as we face the work ahead.

**Focus on One Area of Action:** Whether it's voting rights, women's rights, or climate action, choose an issue to learn deeply about and engage with, step by step.

**Prioritize Physical Self-Care:** Nourish yourself with rest, healthy food, and exercise to stay resilient for the long journey.

Micah 6:8 says we are called to "act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God." These aren't just ideals—they're practices that guide us forward, transforming our world as we embody them in each choice we make.

Hard work is ahead, and we will need courage, patience, and resilience. Let's commit to being people of peace and purpose, holding each other up, and choosing—again and again—the path of Love.

We are in this together, friends. Together, we can bring light to even the darkest paths.

With faith and resolve,

Cameron