

## A Letter to the People of Stone Hill Church November 9, 2016

### Pastoral Guidance on Responding to the 2016 Presidential Election Results

“The most stunning political upset in American history.’ That’s how ABC News commentator George Stephanopoulos described Donald Trump’s victory in last night’s election.”

So wrote Jim Denison, a leadership colleague of mine, in this morning’s edition of his daily column. I’ve heard a lot of other people use that word “stunning” to capture their reaction to Mr. Trump’s upset. But once you move through the stun, how do you process the news and its implications? Here are seven pieces of advice to help you:

- **Affirm God as God and reset your trust in Him.** The events that surround us can sometimes cloud the bigger picture. But nothing that has happened in the past few days has changed the truth that God is God, that he is sovereign over all things, and that he and his goodness can be trusted.
- **Pray for what worries you.** “Pour out your heart before God,” the psalmist says. So, in addition to pouring out your heart to friends and loved ones, make sure you pour out your worries and fears and concerns to God. Sure, he already knows what’s on your mind, but he works in our hearts powerfully when we are transparent with him.
- **Pray and speak fervently for healing and unity in this country.** Everyone, including the presidential candidates, acknowledges that the US is torn apart. Deep division has happened before in history; it will undoubtedly happen again. But this moment is our moment to rebuild unity. So pray for it. Speak on behalf of it. Encourage others to pursue it. And as one step toward that unity, move beyond angry Facebook posts and tweets and turn toward a restored commitment to love even our enemies.
- **Mend any rifts that you are a part of as a result of this election.** It makes no sense to pray and speak for unity if we don’t also restore it where it has been lost. So put basic principles of Christian peacemaking to work. Be courageous enough to address relationships that have soured during the campaign. Go to [www.peacemaker.net](http://www.peacemaker.net) for practical help.
- **Assure minority and disenfranchised brothers and sisters that you are as committed as ever to forwarding understanding, reconciliation, and justice.** As the Scriptures say, “weep with those who weep.” All those who, by virtue of background or skin color or status, fear what the future holds need to be listened to and loved. The mind of Christ “counts others as more significant than yourself” in moments like these (Phil. 2:3).
- **Pray for President-Elect Trump as he makes decisions about his leadership team.** The mark of a good leader can be seen in the selection of those who serve as his counselors. Pray that Mr. Trump will surround himself with a cabinet and advisors marked by professional expertise, godliness, conspicuous goodwill, and wisdom.
- **Allow God’s Spirit to mature you.** Don’t get stuck in a set of immediate reactions. As important as it is to allow for them and recognize them, at some point we need to move on. So work with God and turn those reactions into sound convictions, and then push those sound convictions outward into constructive Christ-honoring output.

I close with this great promise for our Great God: *do not be afraid, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand* (Isaiah 41:10).