

What now?

A few thoughts on how we'll get through another Trump term

From the Editors in the [January 2025](#) issue

Published on January 7, 2025

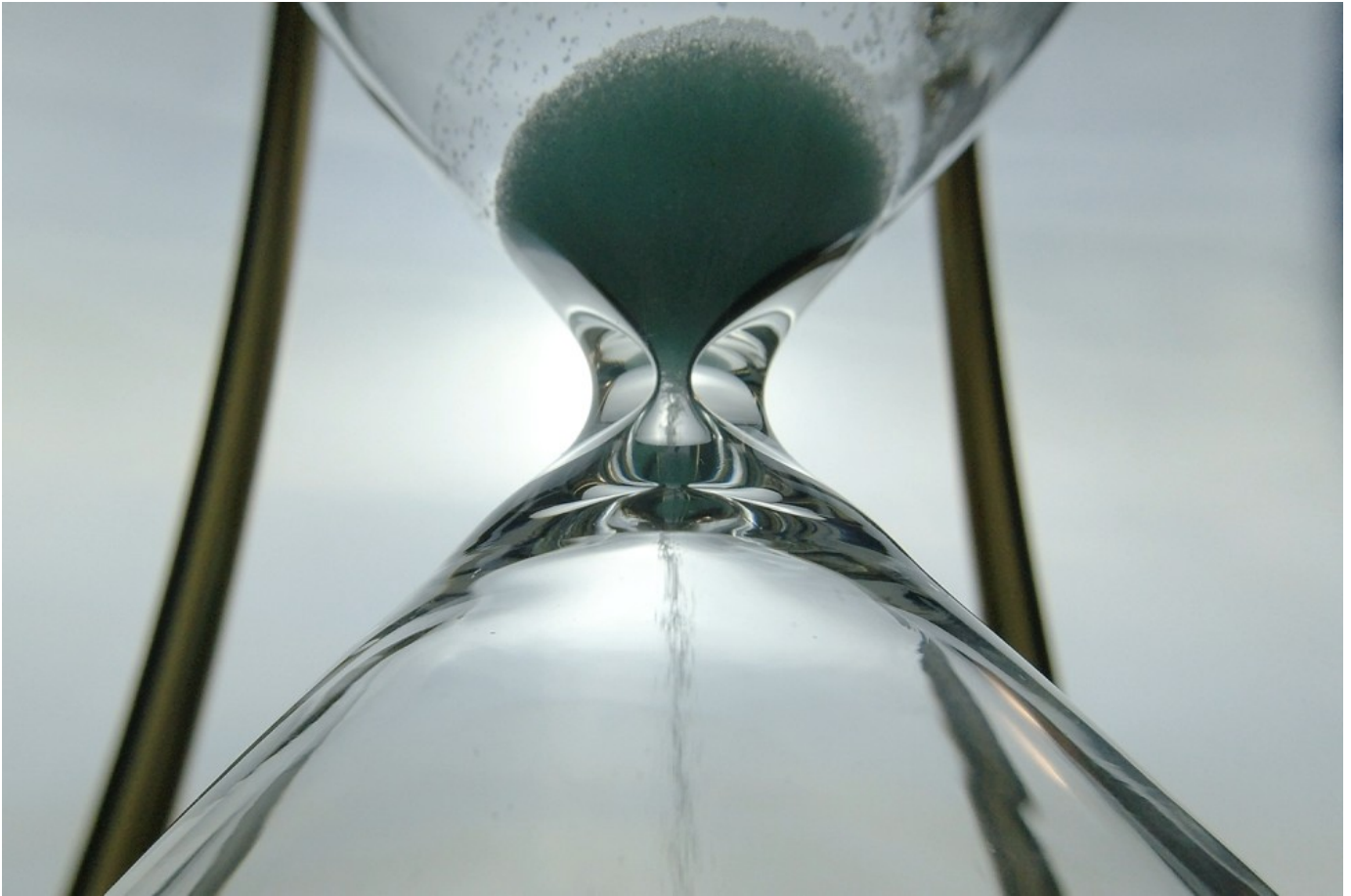


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On January 20, Donald Trump will return to power, with a tighter hold on the federal government and on his party. What are those of us who oppose what he stands for going to do for the next four years? Most of us can't give full-time attention to the brokenness of our national politics, but nor can we tune it out. How do we identify a sustainable approach to living ethically in these difficult times?

The editors have no game-changing hacks to offer here. We can, however, share a few general ideas that we're finding helpful.

- While it can be tempting to suppress our difficult emotions, we need to face them. We can explore healthy ways to process anger, fear, and stress—such as spiritual practices, participation in supportive communities, and therapy.

- Trump won a free and fair election. It's crucial to challenge the harmful ways he uses his office. It's unhelpful to maintain that he holds it illegitimately.

- Whenever anyone is attacked, scapegoated, or denied their rights, the wider community needs to defend them. Sometimes this means putting our bodies on the line. More often it involves standing up to dehumanizing rhetoric, which we've seen escalate to threats and violence against vulnerable groups.

- Many people will be harmed by policy decisions to come. All who suffer deserve our compassion—whether or not they share our views. “All of us, including my neighbors with the Trump signs, contain more than our political allegiances,” [writes Valerie Weaver-Zercher](#).

- Nor can we think too narrowly about who we're willing to work with politically going forward. Neither George W. Bush's electoral coalition nor Barack Obama's is viable anymore. Whatever comes next will require an open mind.

- Trump represents an authoritarian threat that is unprecedented in the United States. But no president or party represents God's way of justice and love. There is work to do no matter who's in power, [writes Julian DeShazier](#). “The difference,” he says, “is whose office we will call and how loud we will have to yell.”

- Institutions that promote community, democracy, information access, and truth-telling are as important as ever. Journalism, education, libraries, congregations, and civic groups all need our support.

- While all politics seems to be national now, the policies that affect people's lives continue to be enacted primarily at the state and local levels. We can't let the spectacle in Washington dominate our attention.

- This will be a hard time, and then it will end. We can easily be consumed by trying to game out exactly how hard or for exactly how long. But our hope lies in being present and faithful to our calling to pursue justice, promote compassion, build

solidarity, and stand up for things that matter.

“We have no choice but to endure,” writes Weaver-Zercher. Constant agitation is unsustainable; resigned acquiescence is indefensible. We will have to identify patterns of engagement and rest that empower us to endure what’s to come. We will have to get through it together.