

**First and Center
Pastor's Blog
January 23, 2019**

Yesterday, by way of a Supreme Court decision, it was Transgender people in the military whose lives are being restricted. Sadly, it has become standard operating procedure in the government these days to take groups of people, label them, and restrict them in some way. The reality of the fact that we are all human beings gets lost in the ways we are being divided from each other at a structural, as well as an emotional, level. The deep sadness of the whole incident with the Covington boys in Washington is a clear example. A group of Black Jews taunting Native Americans who are in turn taunted by white boys in MAGA hats shouting "Build the Wall!" I'm not sure how the Mexican border wall has anything to do with either Black Americans or Native people, but that's beside the point. The Wall has now become a symbol of White Supremacy and has very little to do with border protection.



In the David Bentley Hart translation of II Corinthians 6:11, we read *"Our mouth has been opened to you, Corinthians, our heart has grown expansive. You are not constrained by us, but you are constrained in your own inward parts. But, as a fair exchange...become yourselves expansive as well."*

Become expansive. Become expansive. Breathe that in. Feel your body open up; your heart, your mind, your spirit. Whenever you get the chance, today, become expansive in your living. Don't let fear or the words of others constrain your capacity to love. And for goodness' sake, don't constrain others' capacity to love. As the old hymn says, *"There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea."* Let us be as our maker. Become expansive.

~ The Rev. Shelly Stackhouse,
Transitional Minister