

**FIRST AND CENTER**  
**Pastor's Blog**  
**May 9, 2018**



Mother's Day. This coming Sunday. In my immediate family, this is a complicated day. As an infertile woman, for many years this day was about nothing but pain, eased only by my love for my mother and the chance to celebrate her. My three children are all adopted, so we remember that they have had three mothers: their birth mothers, their foster mothers, and me. That's seven mothers for the whole family, plus my husband's and mine. And each of the children has complicated, and not always positive, feelings about the whole process of changing mothers three times, and understandably so. This past year, my husband's mother died at the age of 89.

As you might imagine, we are kind of glad to have my daughter's college graduation on Sunday to distract us from the whole sentimental and retail-driven Mother's Day culture around us.

Lots of people have complicated relationships to Mother's Day. Those whose mothers have been abusive or absent. Those whose mothers did not, or could not, stop a family member from being abusive. Those whose mothers have died. Those who desperately want to be a mother and are unable to conceive or adopt. Those whose adoptions have fallen through. Those who were unprepared for motherhood and lack the resources to care for their children. Those whose families are pressuring them to have children but do not want to do so at this time, or perhaps, ever. Those mothers who are estranged from their children. Those mothers whose children have died. Those birthmothers who placed their children for adoption. Those mothers whose children have been removed from their care.

Given this reality, this Mother's Day, be loving to your mother if she is in your life. But, also consider making a gift, saying a prayer, doing an act of kindness to help those in any of the situations I described above. And if you are in the church, remember that through promises we all make at baptisms, you are a Mother to every person baptized in our church. Or any church. Sunday, in whatever way you can, love one another as God, our Mother, has loved us.

~ The Rev. Shelly Stackhouse  
Transitional Pastor