

FIRST AND CENTER
Pastor's Blog
June 19, 2018



Today is Juneteenth, the day that enslaved African Americans in Texas finally got the news of the Emancipation Proclamation. Freedom from chains day! A day to celebrate hope and possibility.

Celebrated this year in the context of children—and separately their parents—being put in cages because they fled awful stuff to try to get to what they thought would be a place of safety and hope and freedom in the US. Desperate mothers and fathers trying to ensure their children can simply grow up.

Many are wringing their hands saying that this is not America! This is not a nation that is so cruel and callous! And one would hope that to be true, but our history on this is not good. For a couple hundred years, enslaved Africans had their children ripped out of their arms to be sold. Native Americans had their children taken away to boarding schools where their names were changed, and they were stripped of their language and culture. Poor children in New York, whose parents died in a flu epidemic, were once shipped on “orphan trains” to the Midwest and West and given as laborers to farm families. Children’s lives have not always been valued in this country. We need to be truthful about the past.

We also need to work to ensure that the present is different. Keep up the pressure on the President and Congress. Reunite these children with their parents. Toddlers are not members of gangs likely to threaten anyone. They need their families. Remember the past and say to anyone who will listen that we remember history and do not want to repeat it!

~ Rev. Shelly Stackhouse
Transitional Minister