



FIRST AND CENTER

Pastor's Blog

November 8, 2017

“Are there in us, in you and in me right now, that recklessness of the loving heart, that wild courage, that crazy gladness in the face of darkness and death, that shuddering faithfulness even unto the end of the world, through which new things can come to pass?”

~ Frederick Buechner

This quote has hung on a wall in every office I've had since it was given to me at my ordination in 1982. I happened to look up at it today as I was thinking again about all the darkness and death that seems to have gripped this country, and my first answer was “no, not in me.” Or maybe, more optimistically, “I'm not sure.” What seems to be in me so often these days is a sense of helplessness. I hear that from a lot of folk, so I know I'm not alone.

While berating myself for not being courageous enough in speaking truth to power, or not being able to hold onto crazy gladness when faced with daily death details in the news, I went back to the first phrase, too easily skipped over: “recklessness of the loving heart.” It seems to be profoundly reckless to love these days. The prevailing emotion appears to be fear, followed closely by anger, and then, by hate.

Maybe that's what's required of me, and maybe you, too. Reckless love. The kind that does not put armed guards at the church door. The kind that extends to Muslims, and “heaps burning coals on the heads” of White Supremacists (see Romans 12:20-21). The kind that continues to think there is merit in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and welcoming the stranger.

While I am working, then, on courage and gladness, and “shuddering faithfulness,” and hoping against hope that new things will come to pass before it's too late, I will look daily for opportunities to love recklessly. Like Jesus did.

~ Rev. Shelly Stackhouse,
Pastor