

To All Generations

Psalm 100

Center Church, Hartford

October 27, 2019

The Rev. Dr. Rochelle A. Stackhouse

"For God is good and steadfast in love forever, and God is faithful to all generations." ~ Psalm 100

There have been times in my life when I had trouble believing that. The years I spent struggling with infertility come to mind. I know some of you have had or are having much worse struggles than I have ever had, and I expect that sometimes you wonder if God is good, all the time, as the saying goes. Sometimes I have trouble believing it when I walk through Hartford or listen to the news. Maybe you feel that way, too, sometimes.

When I have been in the midst of doubt about God's good intentions toward me, my family, this country, or the earth as a whole, I have come to church. I come to a community where I know people are at all different stages of relationship with God. I come because I know someone in the place is praying for people like me. I know that even if I don't feel I can share what is going on with me, that when folk around me start singing, or breathe in rhythm to prayer, or eat and drink at the table with me, or reach out a hand to say, "Peace be with you," and mean it, that I will experience the goodness of God, the steadfast love. And I wonder if perhaps the people who come and sleep on our steps but hesitate to come in to worship have come to this place to rest because they can feel the faithfulness of generations and find hope for another day.

I know that here in this congregation, that kind of faithful, loving community has been happening for almost 400 years, over 200 of them in this building.

I support this church financially because I believe it is critical that this congregation continue to be here for those inside these walls and for the city of Hartford. Someone, I think Lesley, summed up our new mission priorities in this way: "As Center Church, we respond to God by nurturing faith and building authentic connections and relationships." It's as basic as that. There are fewer and fewer places in our lives where our faith, our hope, finds nurture and support and even fewer places where we can find authentic relationships and where we can be connected to people of all races, sexual orientations, gender identities, and ages and find purpose in working together for our communities.

This is one of them.

Today we ask you to think about what this church has meant to you, means to you now, and will mean to generations to come, even as our ancestors did in their generosity, without which we would simply not exist today. What you give makes a difference; what you give in dollars, what you give in hours, what you give in wisdom and expertise. What you give means that Center Church will continue to be that place which connects us to God and to each other, reminds us that God is good, all the time, teaches us how to make our world a better place, and helps us to live that out in specific ways through our mission and social action.

You already know this; I don't need to tell you. So, I'm going to show you a video that Logan made for our new website that reminds us all why Center Church needs to be strong and present, now and to all generations.