

## **FIRST AND CENTER**

### **Pastor's Blog**

**March 14, 2018**

Today, I stood at a press conference at the State Capitol with DACA students in Connecticut seeking to be able to apply for financial aid when attending state colleges and universities. I was silent as I listened to their heartfelt desire to study and the challenges of funding a college education that many of us parents know all too well (I currently have two children in college). I imagined that each of

these students and thousands of others might graduate from college and end up impacting our world for the good in small or large ways, and I did not want anything to impede their progress toward that goal!

At the same time as we gathered, I knew that across the nation school students left school for 17 minutes at least to call attention to the need for measures to help end the rampant gun violence that has seized our nation. I later saw video of students marching, students speaking, students singing, and adults staying quiet. This was not a time for politicians or even their teachers to speak. The students have found their voices, and we need to listen to them. Then, we need to join them in acting for change in small and large ways as we seek to re-imagine a culture that celebrates death.

One of my favorite books, *A Day No Pigs Would Die* by Robert Newton Peck, has the immortal line "Never miss a chance to keep your mouth shut." This, to a character who needed to learn how to listen. I am a talker, an extrovert, and someone who talks for a living, for heaven's sake! Today, I tried to listen in hard, to both the Dreamers of DACA and the dreamers in our schools. I need to make an effort to do that from time to time: listen. Not just to the spoken word, but on social media as well, for today, sometimes listening means stop typing. Where do I hear the Spirit speaking, writing, dreaming today? Where do you?



The Holy  
Spirit's  
Voice is as  
loud as your  
willingness  
to listen.

~ Rev. Shelly Stackhouse  
Transitional Pastor