

FIRST AND CENTER

Pastor's Blog

September 5, 2018



What's the point of a steeple (pun intended!)? Why did our congregation just spend an outrageous amount of money to repair and renew our had-been-falling-down-200-year-old steeple? Why not just let it come down and re-shingle the roof and be done with it? Spend the money on something else...?

Legitimate question, which, I understand, many people wrestled with before entering on the funding campaign and the construction project a couple of years ago. Here are my thoughts after having spent time in and around this particular steeple for a year now.

- *Steeple point.* They point to us to something beyond ourselves. They remind us to look up, out of our phones and devices, out of our hunched-over despair, out of the dirt and dust of city life, up. Not “up to God,” because God is down in that city dirt as much as up in the sky, but up to remember there is more to life, to the world, to the universe than what is down here.
- *This steeple has a clock.* It reminds us of the time of day, yes, but also reminds us that God is involved in all parts of our days and nights, not just on Sunday morning. God's time is beyond and around our time.
- *This steeple has a bell.* It also reminds us of the time of day, but it also brings us a sound that transcends the noise of traffic, shouting, phones ringing, sirens blaring. This one is a gentle “bong,” but loud enough to hear. Gentle, but clear. Like God. The sound calls us to prayer, much like the call of a minaret for a Muslim.
- *This steeple is not the tallest thing in Hartford the way it was in 1807.* Now, it is tucked in under the Travelers' Tower, the Gold Building, and others. You can just see the weathervane from I-91 as you come off the Capitol exit. You can see it as you walk down Main Street. It doesn't tower over; rather, it sneaks in among commerce and cares to reach out in love and beauty, to say, “*God is still here, still speaking, still loving Hartford.*”

~ The Rev. Shelly Stackhouse,
Transitional Minister