

FIRST AND CENTER

Pastor's Blog

September 7, 2017

Less than a week in the office officially, trying to be what my techie late brother-in-law used to call "Plug and Play" as Transitional Minister here, receiving input at a rather furious rate, I sat down this morning to pray. Uncharacteristically for an extrovert like me, I left a time of silence and listened. The words that came to me rise from the pages of the book of Esther: *"For such a time as this."*

At first I thought those words were directed to me, that I was placed here at Center Church for whatever this time is in the life of this congregation. I still think that's part of it, but it became clear that those words applied more directly to this congregation. We are here in Hartford for such a time as this. Such a time as this in the world. Such a time as this in the USA. Such a time as this in Connecticut. Such a time as this in this city.

This blog is called "**First and Center.**" Not our address, but our names. We were indeed the First Church of Christ in Hartford. I've been reading a helpful bio of Thomas Hooker (supplied by our librarians) so I have some idea of our beginnings. I take history seriously, as often patterns are set in place that can live on for centuries. In that time, this church and its pastors provided guidance, comfort, challenge, and strength to people on the frontier, including both members and non-members, farmers, and community leaders. First, the settlers built a meetinghouse. God lived in the Center of the village. We can study the history that made us "First," and we should. We must remember, however, that we are here, now, *"for such a time as this."* Now, in this time, we are at the Center of a vibrant and troubled city in a vibrant and troubled country and world. I want to listen to your input now; how do we serve God from the Center? Let's talk.

~ Rev. Shelly Stackhouse,
Pastor