

Second Congregational Church of Greenwich

Conversation, Celebration, Community - Of Faith

July 24, 2019

Dear Friends of Second Church,

Last weekend, the *New York Times* ran a feature asking readers about their experiences of being told to “go back” to some place from which they had, presumably, come. 16,000 people responded, sharing stories of moments like their first day at a new school, or trying to pick up a ham at Costco with their mother for Thanksgiving, meeting a friend for a drink and chatting in a language other than English, tying the shoelace of their four-year old in a park — even while waiting on line for the White House Easter Egg Roll in 1988.

The moments they describe in just a sentence or two are heartbreaking.

They also serve to remind us of how intolerance in some of its ugliest forms is not only horrifyingly pervasive, but often remarkably casual, an endless game of mind and spirit, according to which there’s nothing that they’ve “done” to attract such vitriol—nevertheless, it somehow remains their trouble to figure out how “do” something else.

Do what they might in order to navigate around the very possibility of such moments as best they can, the very point is that they can’t. They never, ever can.

This is not to say they should. In serving a God who calls us to engage our differences in the name of a deeper unity, we in the Church often speak about the ways in which neighbors have claims on each other’s care and attention.

But how can anyone do whatever they’re supposed to do in order to “avoid” or otherwise manage the discomfort of a complete stranger, particularly one who signals their own indifference to such claims in a few quick words—while you’re just trying to pick up a ham with your mom?

Where, exactly, is anyone supposed to “go back” to? And where is the Church when these moments occur, as they clearly do, in thousands of moments and seemingly benign spaces each day?

What part of the “shining city on a hill” seems brighter for that?

It’s not a new problem. Throughout our nation’s history, standing on the receiving end of bigotry has warped the lives and dimmed the spirits of people from any number of backgrounds. Our proudest moments are those when we have worked to reckon with that legacy and build a better world. In fact, the great challenge of working for justice and dignity isn’t that the way seems unclear, but rather that it takes so long.

The Gospel seems to point us to such work—both in ourselves, and among our communities.

When intolerance says “go back,” God says, “abide in me.” When fear says, “stick with your own kind,” Jesus says, “love thy neighbor as thyself.”

Elsewhere, he reminds us that “perfect love casts out all fear.” In learning to love one another, we perfect so many things. May the union of the nation we claim to love so dearly be similarly perfected as we do.

See you in church,

Max

Shawn's Sermon this week
"The One Who Saw Jesus"
is based on Scripture from:
Luke 8:26-39

If you would like to hear
past Sermons you can
find them on our website:
2cc.org



Coffee Hour – there is a sign-up sheet in Fletcher Hall for those who would like to bring baked goods for "Sunday Morning Coffee Hour." We recommend that you bring approximately four dozen bite-size items. The church will continue to supply fruit and beverage.
You can also sign-up via email pam@2cc.org.

Do you "Like" us?



Be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
& tag us in any of your
#2CCGreenwich photos!