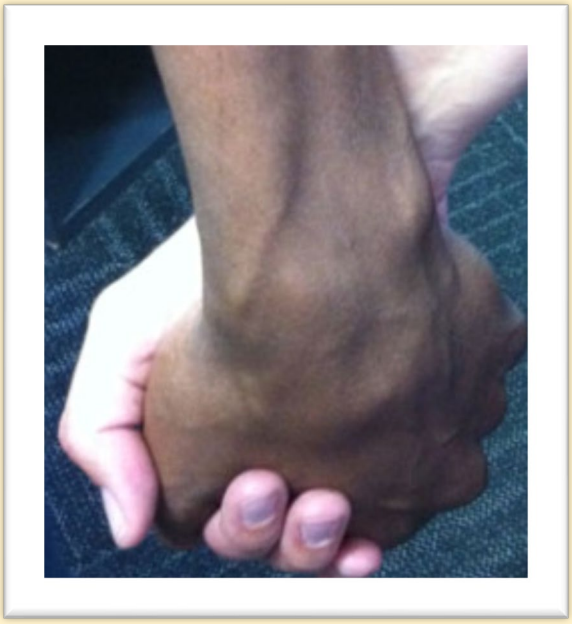
First and Center
Pastor's Blog
October 8, 2019



A couple of weeks ago, at the service where we remembered 1619 and the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in Virginia, I invited people to make personal commitments to continuing the work of ending racism in America. When I read those cards and prayed them to God, I found myself moved to tears. Here are just a few of the commitments you made:

- Continue to intentionally hire, and advance, men and women of color.
- Learn more about the history of racism and how to help eradicate it in my life.
- Advocate for church-wide racial justice training.
- Never forget my enslaved ancestors.
- Learn more about black history.
- Don't let stereotypical statements about African-Americans go unchallenged—speak up!
- We will vote in 2020!
- Acknowledge whenever possible the beautiful contributions black Americans have made to art, music, and culture in America.
- In regard to reparations: encourage our legislators to improve our inner-city schools so they are comparable to suburban schools.
- Treat all with love, kindness, respect. Act against and voice against racism.
- Realize that systemic racism can manifest in my own actions.
- I will continue to check my language and my privilege, and listen when others call me out.
- Teach the story of 1619 to the children at Camp Asto Wamah this summer.
- Advocate for the eradication of poverty, which disproportionately affects people of color.
- Continue to tell the true story of this country.

Many others had sentiments similar to those above. If you were in worship that day, and made a commitment, how are you acting on it? If not, what is your commitment? We are in this for the long haul, for that arc bending toward justice is kind of stuck right now. May our collective weight bend it just a little, with the help of God.

~ Rev. Shelly Stackhouse,
Transitional Minister