

Interfaith Thanksgiving Service Sermon Notes
Rev. Kelly Jane Forbush
November 23, 2014

PRAYER

I come from Massachusetts - just 30 minutes from Plymouth.
So, when I was a kid and Thanksgiving came around,
 all the kids dress up like pilgrims and Native Americans.
We sat at a big table and all got along.

The folktale is beautiful and quaint - but the history is a bit more troubling.
Over time the Europeans nearly wiped out the native people and their land was taken,
 except for a few pieces big enough to build casinos.
The killing of non-white bodies didn't stop,
 it continued through the enslavement of Africans,
 Jim Crow lynching, and modern-day shootings.
And today we have young people growing up in fear of their lives.

On Thursday evening, at the gathering in the chapel at Trinity,
 a young black man got up to share a poem he had written.
 the poem was brilliant, but what stirred my soul was his introduction.

He said,
 "black men spend their lives preparing to be murdered.
 I hope my mother and sisters don't lose me like that,
 but I get scared, when I think of the black men throughout history who have been murdered -
 from Rodney King through Michael Brown - it overwhelms me.
And all I can do is pray."

My favorite prayer, the one I start every sermon with, is the serenity prayer.
Because some things, like our past, we can't change, but there is a whole lot we can still change and
I have hope that change is in the works.

It gives me hope that you all are here tonight -
 making a commitment to engage with people of dif. faith traditions.

It gives me hope the EHIM exists
 and that clergy from this town have reached out to welcome me.

It gives me hope that on Thursday morning a large group of service providers met
 with the chief of police, the superintendent and a state rep,
 to discuss the color bias of the juvenile justice system.

What gave me hope was hearing the efforts already underway,
 and the openness to delve deeper into making our system more fair.

It gives me hope that vigils popped up throughout the country after 9/11.

It gives me hope that at the end of my ordination day -
 the day I officially became UCC clergy -
 some of my closest friends and I gathered in my home for tea -
as we talked, we shared ministry stories and hopes -
 the funny thing was that of the 8 of us gathered,
 only one other person was UCC.

It gives me hope that at a rally we crossed over and talked about our faith.
[elaborate]

Before I continue -

are there other things that give you hope? [people share]

May we hold on to these hopes and give thanks for the goodness underway here in East Hartford.