



February 8, 2017

A WITNESS FOR JUSTICE

On Friday, January 20, 2017, at noon, a new President took office. I wasn't able to watch the inauguration live, because I was in my final day of a weeklong intensive course on interfaith relations. Our class of twenty-five students from many area theological schools was spending the day at the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center, the mosque in Roxbury. We had spent a whirlwind week looking at different topics in engaging folks from other religions, other points of view, all with different intersecting identity markers.

But as my formal course ended, I jumped in a car late Friday night for a continuation of that whirlwind. Teamed up with my "other mom" and a couple of her close relatives, we drove overnight from Boston to Washington, DC to participate in the Women's March on Washington. The march was organized by women to support the protection of rights, safety, health, and families in all their diversity. There were many of us who saw in this march the values of our Christian faith. In my intersectional dialogue, I quite literally went overnight from a controlled academic environment with a couple of dozen voices to a crowd of about half a million.

My group of four first headed to First Congregational UCC, a sister church near the Mall that had opened its doors in hospitality with breakfast foods and snacks to take for later. I saw some friends from the Massachusetts Conference and others from across the country. At 9:00, the church held a commissioning led by pastors of the church and leaders of our denomination's Washington office for Justice and Witness Ministries. After that, I picked up a sign and our group headed out.

There was a pre-march rally beginning at 10:00, and the march itself was scheduled to step off around 1:00 or so. With more than double the amount of people in town than the organizers planned, it was a really overwhelming crowd. We couldn't get close enough to hear the rally, and we only occasionally could glimpse the big screen to guess who might have been speaking. And there were so many people that the march wasn't very march-like; it was more of a blob of people moving sort of in the same direction until we couldn't go anywhere anymore.

But as I look back, I think about the words of the sign I carried: "I'm a witness for justice." I didn't make the sign; I picked it up at the church. And somehow that just fits. When I think about the church and what we do as a body together, I think I can say those words all the time: I'm a witness for justice. Sometimes those actions involve masses of people, often it's just one or two. But we together can be witnesses for justice all the same.

Peace,

Adam

Adam Isbitsky,
Seminarian