

Becoming a Welcoming Church

Lev. 19:1-2, 15-18, 33-44; Ps. 146; Mark 10:41-45; Phil. 2:1-8

One of the goals of this sermon series is to help all of us better understand how to be more intentional in inviting, welcoming, receiving and caring for those who are not a part of our church-family – “strangers” – so that they find a spiritual home here at the WUMC and discover for themselves the abundant life that Jesus promises.

A “stranger” is an outsider who comes into the midst of the community without the network of relationships that can be counted upon to ensure care, protection and acceptance.

Hospitality is how we love others in a real, tangible and practical way.

Hospitality is at the core of the Gospel.

Genuine love and hospitality towards others – especially those who are not like us – is the strongest evidence that we are children of God.

Without hospitality there is no church.

Hospitality is grounded in our personal experience of God’s grace.

Hospitality equals holiness. ~ Leviticus 19

Holiness is God’s call to live with love, compassion, fairness, generosity and humility towards others.

God has a heart for the outsider, the newcomer and the stranger.

It is easy to feel like “a stranger in a strange land,” even in church.

Being a welcoming, hospitable human being and a friend to the friendless, is what makes you holy.

There is no true hospitality without someone taking the role of the servant.

Will you commit yourself to making WUMC a welcoming church?

Daily Readings: Becoming a Welcoming Church

MONDAY – Read Leviticus 19:1-4, 9-17, 30-37. Why did God say for His people to be holy? How can the response to God’s call to holiness be lived out practically in real life? How do these verses change your understanding of holiness? How does holiness relate to being a welcoming church?

TUESDAY – Read Psalm 146. What would someone’s life look like if they actually lived out verse 2? Why should we not put our “trust in princes” but in God (vss. 3-5)? Verse 9 says, “The Lord watches over the strangers.” How does God use His faithful people to watch over the stranger?

WEDNESDAY – Read Mark 10:41-45. How does Jesus’ understanding of greatness, power and authority differ from that of the world’s? What is Jesus’ primary challenge for us in this passage? How do Jesus’ words, “not to be served but to serve,” relate to how we show hospitality and welcome to visitors and guests on Sunday mornings?

THURSDAY – Read Romans 15:1-7. Through Christ, God has called every Christian to welcome others. In what ways has Christ welcomed us, and how does this enable us to “welcome one another”? How can we be Christ-like in welcoming others?

FRIDAY – Read Matthew 5:41-44. Think about what it would look like in your life to “go the extra mile” for our guests at the church and for friend or foe in the community. Allow Christ to work within you. Trust in Him as you pray, bless and serve.

SATURDAY – Read Luke 11:5-6. Think of a time when you did not have the resources to show hospitality when guests arrived. What did you do? Think of a time when your church did not seem to have the resources to do what it was called to do. What did you do?



Weekly Prayer Concerns

Prayer is vital to everything we do at the Wadsworth UMC. In prayer, we do not simply ask for our needs, or the needs of others, to be met, but seek God's presence and ask Him to bring His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. In prayer, we enjoy time with God, knowing that He welcomes us as His beloved children.

(Please be sure to update your prayer concerns.)

Please mention these persons and others in your prayers this week.

Hospitalized

Hospice Care

Pre-Surgery/Treatment

Carol Ann Sammet - chemo
Jenny Horvath – chemotherapy
Ashley Edwards – chemotherapy
John Neely
Bill Carroll – Mochel's son-in-law

Bereavement & Grief

The Family of Jean Holcomb
The Family of Glen Adams

When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honor them.

- Psalm 91:15

Active Duty Military

Brian Anderson
Russell Conway
Daniel & Sierra Howard
Jeff Keenan
Jacob McIlvaine
Austin McNamara
Zachary Ramsay
Glenn Schroeder
Alex Staub
Scott Valentine
Michael Wallet
Austin Wolfinger

Medical/Health Concerns

Dick Johnson
Bob Moss
Bron Thomas
Betty Jo Blackwood
Gerri Mollica
Doug Johnson
Charlotte Danals
Laurie Brown
Erik Hutter
Sandy Nedoh

Compass Group Discussion Questions

Connect: Share a story about a time your either left a bad first impression, or experienced firsthand a bad first impression. How hard was it to recover from a bad first impression? What kind of first impression do you like to make for guests in your home?

Grow: Read Leviticus 19:1-4, 9-17, 30-37; Philippians 2:1-11.

1. On a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest and perfect, how would you rate our church's greeter ministry? What changes could we make to make to be closer to a perfect score?
2. Pretend you are a first-time guest to our church. Does the signage – inside and outside the building – clearly point you where you need to go?
3. How does Philippians 2:1-11 relate to becoming a welcoming church? What unique qualifications should a member of our greeter's ministry have?
4. What can our church do more effectively to reach the "Millennial Generation" and the children?
5. Why must a "welcoming church" have a real and noticeable presence in our community?
6. How does hospitality and being a welcoming church extend beyond the walls of our building?

Serve: What practical things can your group do to make our church more welcoming?

Pray: Lord, help me to have the heart and mind of Jesus as I live a life of Christian hospitality!