

The Beautiful and Chaotic Moment of Hospitality

Friends, grace and peace to you in Jesus' name. Amen.

As I sit in my office on this day near the end of March, I am continuously grateful for the kindness and warmth that has been extended to me in these days of settling in. As I'm sure some of you have experienced throughout the course of your lives, the task of moving to a completely new place with a new culture, community, and expectations can be intimidating. Change can be hard, and yet my arrival in this place is not just a change for me—it is a change for you, as well.

You, the people of Faith United, have likely had some anxiety and curiosity as well over the past few weeks. Life in relationship is a beautiful thing, but it comes with risks and a lot of questions—will we get along well? Will she understand us, and will we understand her? What is her preaching and teaching like? Will she like us, and will we like her?

The Bible is pretty clear about how we are to treat the new people in our lives, and right now, we are all new people in one another's lives. In the face of newness and change in this congregation, we are all impacted. Hebrews 13:2 tells us not to “neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.” This verse often makes me think of Abraham and Sarah who, when they lay a feast before three strangers who show up at their tent in the desert, quickly discover that they are hosting messengers of God and are facing a whole lot of change in the upcoming future (Sarah is pregnant, and will soon give birth to Isaac).

It is in the midst of chaos and change, some of the scariest and most uncertain moments of our lives, where God continues to show up and surprise us. This makes the moment of hospitality risky—who knows how God will shake things up in these years to come? How will we all be changed by the act of living in relationship with one another? What does God have up God's sleeves for us?

While I don't have the answer to this question, I can tell you this—God promises to show up in the midst of us, and this is good news. As we continue to introduce ourselves to one another, as you continue to remind me of your names, your occupations, your passions, your doubts, your pain—here, God is among us. As we inevitably make mistakes and disappoint one another—here, God is among us. As we gather together around the table of our Lord each week and share with one another bread and wine, God is physically present with us, strengthening us for the life of love, service, and justice that we are called to as a community. God keeps God's promises. So as we embark on this new adventure of ministry together, keep watch—for we never know how God might surprise us. Thanks be to God!

Peace,

Pastor Marissa Becklin