

May/June 2025 Chimes

Pastor's Page

Hospitality and Neighborliness

“The unhoused are just drug addicts who come to live in our area for the services!”-Some say.

Actually 86% of the unhoused in our county are from our county. So, these are our neighbors, and with the high cost of housing, there will continue to be more people, even possibly us, like them living on the streets, unless we work together to BE neighborly. They are people who have fallen on hard times and can't afford housing in this very expensive area. Yes, some of them use drugs, but for many the drugs come after an event or string of events that made them homeless—an eviction, a divorce, a lost job, a debilitating accident, a serious illness, a change in retirement income/benefits. Some also have mental illness that makes it difficult to stay employed. It's a big issue and can feel overwhelming to know how to help!

Our Westview leaders had a retreat in March to pray for our church and community and to pray about our vision for 2025, given that our scriptures call us to care for the hurting. We were talking about the Recurso De Fuerza tiny homes to be completed by Oct/Nov in our parking lot and how we could spiritually prepare. (The tiny homes are 32 units which can house 34 people with wrap around services and counselors on site 24/7 to help them rehabilitate and hope again for their lives. It is fenced and secure for them. They will then move on to more permanent housing in 6 or so months as they get their feet back on the ground and heal. It's a proven structured model with no tents and trash.) Our hope is that we will not only get to welcome and care for our unhoused neighbors, but that we will also provide opportunities for others in the community to work together to be neighborly and help be part of the solution as well.

For 2025 our leaders embraced the theme of Hospitality.

Hospitality...the word brings forth visions of Martha Stewart and a perfectly set table in a meticulously decorated home.

What is hospitality? In Scripture hospitality comes from the Greek word which means **“Love for strangers.”**

Hospitality is a very important theme in Scripture: From the Lord's Supper, to the Great Banquet at the end of time (Luke 14:15-24, Revelation 19:11-13), to the Healing of the “outcasts” (leper, bleeding woman, blind man, the physically handicapped), to Caring for groups that felt on the outside in Roman times: Samaritans, Gentiles, women, and children.

“Hospitality is a space we need to create within ourselves before we can offer that space to others. Cultivating hospitality begins in our own souls and flows outward [from our relationship with God],” states Cindy S Lee in *Our Unforming, De-Westernizing Spiritual Formation*.

Jesus offers US hospitality!

What has Jesus done to welcome you and care for you, perceiving what you need most?

Hospitality reflects the heart of Jesus who offers us hospitality through: loving reception, unconditional love, being known, acceptance or freedom to be ourselves, spiritual nourishment, a place of rest, grace for our faults, restoration, seeing us in the place that we are and gently inviting us into healing, growth, and becoming fully who we are meant to be.

Cultivating an inner hospitality, especially through connection with Jesus, frees us to offer an open, nonjudgmental space for others, and involves taking risks.

“Hospitality is a posture of openness with which the hosts share of themselves to create an environment where others feel comfortable sharing of themselves too. It can be facilitated through the sharing of food, space, [but it is so much more as it actually is any] embodied practices that invite the opening of our souls to one another.”-
Cindy S Lee

This spirituality of hospitality is:

- Firstly, experiencing God’s hospitable love for us!
- Its root in Scripture is “welcome of the stranger.”
- Hospitality is acceptance, love, openness to the other, attentive listening, invitation to God for healing, (invite them into God’ unconditional, lavish, loving presence!).
- Accepting, nonjudgemental. Helping others feel comfortable & welcome as they are.
- Food, generosity, & fellowship.
- Being REAL and honest so others feel free to be real and honest. It’s restoration & healing, unconditional love, being known, being seen.

How have you experienced this kind of Hospitality?

How and to whom can you extend this hospitality of God’s love to all you meet?

And how can we extend this hospitality as the Westview family to visitors, neighbors, & residents of Recurso De Fuerza Village opening in November?

The Westview leaders talked about tangible ways to prepare to be hospitable to our new neighbors coming in November:

- Talk with Community Action Board (CAB), who will manage Recurso de Fuerza (RDF)Village, about
 - 1.How we can help?
 - 2.Ask if we can have a regular meeting with residents with food & maybe games
 - 3.Help get sign-ups for Adopt a Room to decorate resident’s rooms and for Welcome Baskets: ask JACL, Local Classrooms, Wednesday Bible Study, Valley Heights people.
 - 4.Training of Westview members by CAB on how to care for residents in a healthy way (August?).
 - 5.Invite CAB to worship to share about their work/passion and why they do it. (June 1?) & Potluck, with a message on Matthew 25 (care for the least)
- Reach out to surrounding Neighbors (after consult with CAB):
 - 1.Open House with Food-CAB is already planning on having one, so how can we participate?
 - 2.Adopt a Room & Welcome Baskets
 - 3.Park cleanup on 2nd St and Pizza?
- Reach out to our new neighbors of RDF (after time to settle in):
 1. Lead a Life Reflection/Bible Study in the RDF Village after they have settled in a while. WPC members attend/lead too in order to form relationships and care for them. With Food.
 2. BBQ (with residents cooking) and Games
 3. Other ideas:
 - Tell RDF residents of our First Sunday of the month Brunch after church
 - Invite Residents to help us with SonRise Breakfast and lunch packing—for partnership/dignity/relationships
 - Westview members be intentional in relationships with residents, staff, volunteers, & RDF Board (which will have neighbors on it)
 - Spanish language headsets—buy, and use AI/software to translate.

Are there people you can invite to Westview to be a part of ushering in God's "Kingdom" of love?
Asking them to: Help Volunteer with SonRise Kitchen serving breakfast or making sack lunches? Help
organize an adopt a room group?

Let us Begin praying for how we can help our new neighbors with lots of love and acceptance, and how we can
help people we know become part of the good and joy of what we are seeking to do at Westview?

God, help us to continue to grow in experiencing your loving hospitality to us and extending that hospitality to
others. Help us to BE your church, your hands and voice of love to those who are in need. Please from this
center of your hospitable love give us creativity, wisdom, desire, courage, and compassion.

It is a joy for me to be part of such a loving community! Remember, "The building is not the church; YOU
are!"

May you know ever more fully your beloved-ness in God,
Pastor Dan
