

The Red Door

St. Mary's Episcopal Church

June 2023

RAMBLINGS FROM THE RECTOR



IF GOD HAD A
REFRIGERATOR
YOUR PICTURE WOULD
BE ON IT

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2 NRSV)

What is welcome really? Just recently, as part of one of my courses in my Doctor of Ministry program, I explored this question with a focus group made up of members from our church. I would like to thank those who participated. You not only helped me fulfill the requirements of my course, but I found inspiration and clarity in the process of answering “What is welcome?” together. I hope that you were as enlightened as I was! I would like to share with all of you some of the things that we discovered together.

First, there are two distinctly different methods of welcome: 1) passive – where it is mostly about what we don’t do to push people away; and 2) active – where direct communication is most important, both with those who enter our doors and those who have never heard of us. Most often, people felt unwelcome when they were ignored.

Second, true welcome requires us to be willing to put someone else’s comfort ahead of our own comfort. This may mean that we don’t personally find our worship as fulfilling as normal (we are distracted by “untraditional” behavior or we are called to assist someone who doesn’t know the service. It may mean that we have to spend time studying why a distinct group of people talks / behaves / thinks differently than we do. We cannot welcome someone that we are not willing to understand.

Here in South-West Ohio, we have an opportunity to seek and serve those who are rejected by most of our local brothers and sisters in Christ, but we will have to prove to them that we offer a safe place where they are loved for who they are, not who we want them to be.

Rev Warren Huestis

PARISH READING

EXTRACTED FROM THE CLUTTER OF THE RECTOR'S DESK

WE'RE ALREADY WELCOMING, Why Do We Need to Say So?

The purpose of the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Program is to ensure the welcome, inclusion, celebration, and advocacy for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions; work for racial equity and commit to anti-racist work and support the national program. Since 1983, the RIC program has been a public way for faith communities to see, name, celebrate, and advocate for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions in the Lutheran church. Over time, those commitments have expanded as we continue to live into our values. Every ministry setting begins this journey from their own unique context and Reconciling-Works is here to help you create an authentic welcome journey that is customized to your community.

Why would a faith community want to be on the RIC list? Perhaps you feel your congregation is already welcoming to all people; what difference could having an explicit welcome statement make? Below are reasons current RIC partners have given about why creating a welcome statement and becoming RIC make a difference.

To communicate who you are:

All RIC partners are listed published on the ReconcilingWorks website in a searchable national map, which provides LGBTQIA+ people and allies to search for a faith community in their area. The RIC program is one way to extend specific invitations to people to your community names in its public welcome statement. When people see you have gone through a time of discernment to specifically welcome LGBTQIA+ people and are committed to the work of racial equity, they know you are a community that is skilled at welcoming. This is the kind of good news the world is wanting to hear!

To leave nothing unsaid:

Sadly, our LGBTQIA+, and Black, Brown, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) siblings continue to experience exclusion and harm from people supposedly acting in the name of Christianity. Even churches who declare “All are welcome” often demonstrate to LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC individuals and families that “All” does not include them. For this reason, the welcoming invitation RIC partners create is explicit, recognize the injustices have occurred in the name of faith. As an RIC partner your commitment to work towards the full welcome,

Continued on page 2

VESTRY

Senior Warden Report

John Joy, Sr Warden
 Charles Everhart, Jr Warden
 Richard Davis
 Andrea Harner
 Judy Sauer
 Barb Zumwalde
 2 openings
 Newsletter editor—John Glaze

Samaritan Outreach Services (SOS)

is in need of paper goods! When you shop, please remember YOUR NEIGHBORS and pick up some extra items. There is a box in Lacy Hall to place them. If you have questions, see Rich Davis!
THANK YOU!

It appears summer time is here or at least near, as one is never sure about our Ohio weather! Before I update everyone on the building issues, I believe it is important to acknowledge the many good things happening at St. Mary's right now:

- Attendance is increasing on Sundays; there have been some where Lacy Hall is near capacity!
- We are very appreciative of the generous donations to the church from the Carlene Philips' estate. We all miss Carlene; yet we acknowledge her dedication to the church and life well lived.
- Our Vestry, with Judy taking the lead, is looking at chair/pew options, so please check out the samples we have in Lacy Hall and let someone on the Vestry know what you like and what you don't like.
- Perhaps most importantly, our shared arrangement with All Saints in Washington C. H. has provided us with a stable Priest arrangement, with Rev. Warren quickly digging in and providing us with a wonderful pastoral presence. I would also like to acknowledge the work of interim Rev. Terri Thornton, who guided us for well over a year during some trying times. We are truly grateful to God for these blessings.

There is significant progress being made on the building issues, but unfortunately, much of the recent activity has been "behind the scenes" and not very obvious. We have preliminary drawings done for the flooring and electrical, along with plans for a new HVAC system. The plans call for the HVAC units to be located in the balcony, with enclosed ductwork along each side of the walls at the junction of the walls and ceiling. It is also important to note that a variety of electrical issues have been, and are being addressed, over the past month or two. Most of the wiring and panels in the old building were added on to, and/or rewired with little regard for best practice or long *(continued next page)*

inclusion, celebration, and advocacy of all names in your welcome statement is a lifelong commitment of your community.

For the health of your community:

Engaging in a journey of discernment to become RIC deepens and expands the faith life of the community and builds long-lasting relationships. As members participate in dialogue with one another, they practice putting their faith into speech and action, creating a more vibrant spiritual community. Dually, having a welcoming statement printed in your bulletin, read during worship or posted on your social media pages, serves to remind members who they are and how they have pledged to engage with one another. Many RIC partners report the demographic most often drawn in by the RIC status is young couples with children. These folks are seeking communities prepared to help them raise their children in ways consistent with their values. They want their children to grow up surrounded by diversity and to know their families will never have to question if their children will be welcome as they grow and learn more about who they are. Your welcome shows others the type of community they have entered. It proclaims to the wider church you are a space who has been intentional in the welcome you provide.

Setting RIC Milestones

ReconcilingWorks believes intersectional welcome is a lifelong journey. Whether your RIC Faith Community has been doing this work for 30 years, or you joined the RIC community last month, there are always ways to deepen and expand our welcome to God's beloveds. There are countless milestones to set for your faith community as a way to welcome, include, celebrate, and advocate for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions; as well as people who are Black, Brown, Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC). This welcome extends to their families, and other communities who have been "othered" by the church. Incorporating welcome into the life of your faith community will take time. These milestones will be reached through ongoing education, relationship building, and committed partnership with ReconcilingWorks.

Questions to inspire new milestones:

- >Does my faith community have openly LGBTQIA+ or BIPOC rostered leaders, staff, or lay members in roles of authority and influence?
 - >Does our worship life reflect the diversity of God's creation in hymnody, leadership, imagery, and language?
 - >Is our welcome statement reflected in how we live out our values as a community? How is it shared, taught, and upheld by members and guests of all ages?
 - >How does our children, youth, and family ministry live into our values stated in our welcome statement? Have we prepared our staff and families on welcoming and supporting our LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC siblings?
 - >Does my faith community partner with community organizations who share similar values as named in our welcome statement?
 - >How does our faith community share the good news of our welcome? Can people easily see our welcome from the outside of our building, in our online presence, and when they enter? What images have we displayed to indicate our values? (For example, using the RIC logo, the progressive pride flag, special RIC banners from ReconcilingWorks, images of diverse families, etc.) Do we offer safe and accessible spaces inside our building for people to experience our community fully?
 - >Has our community made a contribution to ReconcilingWorks to further support the RIC ministry and its longevity?
- What are some exciting new milestones your faith community can set for itself?*

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Other helpful resources include:

>To connect with Reconciling in Christ Program Coordinator to discuss your faith community's specific journey, schedule a Zoom meeting at [ReconcilingWorks.org/RICinfo](https://www.reconcilingworks.org/RICinfo)

>One way to expand your welcome to all of God's Beloveds is by using pronouns. For helpful tips around why pronouns matter, be sure to bookmark [ReconcilingWorks.org/Pronouns](https://www.reconcilingworks.org/Pronouns)

>Find helpful resources and tools to set new RIC milestones in the Building an Inclusive Church (BIC) Toolkit, found at [ReconcilingWorks.org/BIC](https://www.reconcilingworks.org/BIC)

>To support your lifelong journey of intersectional welcome, Reconciling-Works has great resources to support your faith community in new learning and awareness on intersectional justice work at [ReconcilingWorks.org/Injustice](https://www.reconcilingworks.org/Injustice)

<https://www.reconcilingworks.org/ric/becomeric/whysayso/>

Continued from last month

Evening Services *(continued from last month)*

In January this year Toronto pastor and blogger, Tim Challies, made these observations on evening worship. He kindly gave me permission to include them here:

Why I Love an Evening Service

Of all the casualties the church has suffered in recent decades, I wonder if many will have longer-lasting consequences than the loss of the evening service. There was a time, not so long ago, when many or even most churches gathered in the morning and the evening. But today the evening service is increasingly relegated to the past.

At Grace Fellowship Church we hold on to the evening service and I wouldn't want it any other way. It is a commitment, to be sure – a commitment for the pastors to plan a second service and to prepare a second sermon, and a commitment for the members to give the church not only the morning but also the evening. But these are small costs compared to the great benefits. Here are a few things I love about an evening service.

It Begins and Ends the Day with God

Perhaps the best part of having an evening service is that, just as the morning service allows you to begin the day worshiping God with his people, the evening services allows you to close the day worshiping God with his people. As a church we love to sing the song "We Are Listening" which proclaims, "Morning and evening we come / To delight in the words of our God." And with an evening service, we are able to do exactly that: We begin the Lord's Day in worship and close it in worship. That's a beautiful thing.

It Sanctifies the Time between

If beginning and ending the day in corporate worship is an obvious blessing of an evening service, a less obvious but still important benefit is that having these bookends around the day encourages the best uses of the Lord's Day while discouraging the less significant uses. Knowing that you will have to leave the house before the football game ends does wonders to uproot any real desire to watch football (or, over time, to even care about football, as I have discovered!). Conversely, knowing that you have four or five hours between services helps you spot a perfect window for extending hospitality. There is no better or more convenient time to open your home, especially to those who drive from a distance, than between the morning and evening service.

It Provides Another Opportunity to Learn

I grew up in the Dutch Reformed tradition where the evening ser-

vice was considered an integral part of any Christian's duty. The morning service was set aside for verse-by-verse preaching through God's Word while the evening service was set aside for advancing question-by-question through the catechisms and confessions. Even if your church will not use an evening service for teaching the catechism, it does offer an opportunity to teach something else, perhaps a second book of the Bible or a topical series. It also affords a natural context to integrate new or young teachers, to give them a place to grow in their ability to teach and preach.

It Provides Another Opportunity to Worship

Just as an evening service opens up more time for teaching, it also opens up more time to sing. I often come to the end of our morning service wishing I could sing more than the five or six or seven songs we sing there. There are so many great songs to sing! The evening service gives us another chance to encourage and admonish one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs – those great songs of the faith.

It Provides Another Opportunity to Serve

There are many people in our church who are eager to serve and to serve regularly. With only one service each week, these people would be serving very irregularly – there simply would not be enough ways for all of them to serve the church on a regular basis. However, the evening service immediately adds many more places to serve – we need more people to greet at the door, more people to lead us in song, more people to care for the young children, and on and on. If there is joy in serving one another, our evening service increases our joy by increasing the ways in which we serve.

It Gives More Time with People I Love

I love my church family; there is no group of people I would rather spend time with. And, frankly, Sunday morning and Wednesday evening just isn't enough. As a pastor I want more time to be with the people I serve, to get to know them, to hear from them. As a church member I want more opportunities to fulfill all those "one another" commands with them and to have the other members fulfill them with me. An evening service is yet another opportunity to be with people I enjoy so much.

It is Countercultural

An evening service counters our culture's obsession with convenience and low commitment in matters of family, life and religion. It can be downright difficult to get the family out the door once on a Sunday, not to mention twice and your neighbors will be convinced that you're crazy for doing it. Let them! The evening service also counters our Christian culture of expecting little from people and, for that reason, being in-timidated to ask much from them. Experience shows that when a church sets the expectation for the evening service, the people rise to it and soon wouldn't have it any other way.

<https://www.christianstudylibrary.org/article/evening-service>

Senior Warden *(cont)*

term usage. As a result, we have, along with McCarty and Associates, looked at the entire electrical service and met with AEP to determine best options regarding the additional HVAC electrical needs, new wiring for a new audio/visual system, and distribution of the electrical service. Like everyone else, I know it seems the project has dragged on, but we have the resources to update the old building properly, and that is still our clear intention. Please let the Vestry know of any questions or concerns!

John Joy
Sr. Warden



The Red Door

St. Mary's Episcopal Church
234 N. High St.
Hillsboro, OH 45133

JUNE SERVICE TIMES

Sunday - 11:30am

2nd & 4th Wednesdays - 12n



Lector & Intercessor Schedule

1st week Betty & Jim Heathcote

**2nd week Connie Reynolds &
Dea Flinn**

3rd week Carol & John Joy

4th week Rich Davis & Connie Reynolds

**5th week Connie Reynolds &
Dea Flinn**

ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH INFORMATION

The Diocese of Southern Ohio
St. Mary's Episcopal Church
234 N. High St Hillsboro, OH 45133
937-393-2043

The Rev. Warren Huestis
Rector

SUNDAY WORSHIP - 11:30 am
In person & Streaming on Facebook

2nd & 4th WEDNESDAYS - 12 noon
In person only

COMMUNION FOR THE HOMEBOUND
Sunday after service.

*We strive to be safe and make our parishioners and
guests feel safe and welcome!*

WEB SITE:
www.smehillsboro.weebly.com