



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Pastor's Page –August 2014

“Show hospitality to strangers, for in so doing, you may be entertaining angels without knowing it.”

I'm thinking about hospitality because, due to unavoidable circumstances, I am on the receiving end right now. How very grateful I am to those who have offered to help with laundry, and who have invited us for a meal! Until you find yourself in a similar situation it's hard to know how important these kindnesses are.

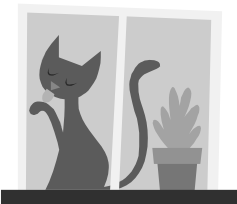
Radical hospitality is not a new concept to our congregation. It is one of the five practices of a vital congregation.

I must admit, all the kindnesses shown us notwithstanding, since coming to Ellwood there have been two times that the rules have gotten in the way of hospitality. One was when I tried to get a library card. The other was when I went to open a bank account. In both cases, the problem was that I am not yet officially a resident. The bank figured it out eventually. I go back for my library card after I move in.

I'm not upset about being questioned as to whether I qualified. I am reminded, however, how easily the letter of the law undermines our attempts to be hospitable. People should always come first. And grace should always be our choice in situations where we're not sure what to do. After all, our willingness to extend hospitality to a grieving family needing a place to hold a funeral service, a child who needs to use the bathroom, or a recovery group that needs a place to meet, might just be the kindness that opens the door to their coming to Jesus Christ.

An angel is a messenger of God. To me, every stranger who comes needing a place of comfort, safety and hope is a messenger of God, because they give me the opportunity to extend radical hospitality.

Pastor Pat



HELP! I'M STUCK IN JOHNSTOWN. MY NEIGHBOR FEEDS ME AND CLEANS MY LITTER BOX BUT I MISS MY PERSON, AND I KNOW SHE MISSES ME. I KNOW I NEED TO BE PATIENT BUT THAT'S HARD. I GUESS I'LL TAKE A NAP.

- GEORGE, THE PARSONAGE CAT

