

YOU ARE WELCOME HERE (Romans 15:7, Luke 19:1-10)

Welcome / Equip / Send — Week 1, Dave Geldart, September 6, 2026, Tru Community Church

1. [1] INTRO: (WHENS A TIME YOU FELT REALLY WELCOMED?)

- a. Good morning! I'm so glad you're here — especially you kids! You're an important part of our church family.
- b. I want to ask you a question — kids, this one's for you too.
 - i. **When's a time you felt really welcomed?**
 - 1. Not just "hello." Not just somebody being polite.
 - ii. I mean a time you knew, way down deep — *they actually wanted me here.*
- c. Maybe you were the new kid on the team.
- d. Or maybe you started at a new school, and you walked into a room where you didn't know a single face, wondering *where do I sit, who do I talk to...*
 - i. And then somebody sat down next to you. Said, "come sit with us."
 - ii. Remembered your name the next time.
- e. Usually it's not a huge gesture. It's small. But that small thing says something huge:
 - i. **[2] You are welcome here! [PAUSE]**

2. That's where we're starting this fall as a church.

- a. You've probably noticed the maps from Acts are still up
- b. **Last week we thought about where God has placed us specifically --**
 - i. our Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the ends of the earth —
 - ii. and you put a pushpin where God's placed *you*.
- c. Here's what I want you to remember: **that pin isn't just a place. It's people.**
 - i. Your actual neighbor. Your coworker.
 - ii. The kid in your class. The person you bump into at the coffee shop.
- d. **So what do we do with that?**
 - i. At Tru, we're putting it into three words we've already been using:

3. [3] WELCOME. EQUIP. SEND.

- a. **These aren't three programs** we're rolling out.
 - i. **or boxes everyone checks** in the same order.
- b. **They're the pathway of following Jesus together.**
 - i. **Welcome** — moving from disconnected toward belonging.
 - ii. **Equip** — growing as a disciple of Jesus.
 - iii. **Send** — living on mission, investing in others.
- c. **[4] On the screen and out in the lobby, you'll see each stage mapped into three steps**

- i. we'll unpack those over the next few weeks.
- d. **Today, we're focusing in on just the first word: Welcome.**

4. WE WELCOME BECAUSE CHRIST WELCOMED US

- a. **Some people are just naturally good at this —**
 - i. five minutes in a room and they've learned three names and invited someone to lunch.
- b. **Some of you just thought, *that sounds exhausting.***
 - i. Fair. Some of us would rather stand at the edge of the room and watch.
- c. Good news — **welcome was never about your personality type.**
- d. [5] [ROMANS 15:7, ESV] *"Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."*
- e. Notice where Paul puts the starting point: **as Christ has welcomed you.**
 - i. We welcome because we've already been welcomed.
- f. Jesus didn't wait for us to get impressive. Didn't wait for us to clean up.
 - i. He moved toward us first — even at great cost to himself.
- g. **So welcoming someone doesn't mean pretending everything's fine**
 - i. or approving of everything somebody believes or does.
- h. It's leading with grace and love, because that's what Jesus did with us.

5. [6] WELCOME MEANS WE MAKE ROOM

- a. Let me show you...
 - i. [BRING OUT CHAIR WITH BACKPACK SITTING ON IT.]
- b. Kids, help me out. **Look at this chair.**
 - i. [GESTURE TO BACKPACK.] **Anybody sitting here?**
 - 1. **No — but is there room for somebody?** [PAUSE.]
 - ii. **Nope. My stuff's taking up the space.**
 - iii. **I need a volunteer — a kid.** [INVITE CHILD UP.]
 - 1. **Come on up — go ahead, have a seat.**
 - 2. [LET CHILD TRY, BACKPACK STILL THERE.]
 - iv. **Hang on — sorry about that.** [MOVE BACKPACK.]
 - 1. **There we go. Now sit.** [CHILD SITS.]
- c. **What changed?** The chair didn't change. I did. **I made room.**
 - i. That's what welcome does.
 - ii. It says: *there's room here for you. For your story.*
 - 1. *Room for your questions. Room for you to be known.*

- d. So kids, here's your line – the big idea for today. Everybody, say it with us:
 - i. **"Welcome means we make room for people."**
 - ii. One more time. **"Welcome means we make room for people."**
- e. And let's give it a motion — when we say "welcome," open your arms.
 - i. *[DEMONSTRATE:]* Arms open. Room made. That's welcome.
 - ii. *[CHILD RETURNS TO SEAT.]*
- f. Now let's watch Jesus do this. With a wealthy guy that nobody liked. And he was so short he has to climb a tree just to see Jesus go by.

g. [LUKE 19:1-10 - INVITE KID READER]

[7] 1 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. 3 He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. 5 When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." 6 So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

[8] 7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner." 8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." 9 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

- h. Jesus doesn't just spot for a moment him in the crowd.
 - i. He stops. Looks up. Calls him by name.
 - ii. Then says I WANT TO HANG OUT WITH YOU — ON YOUR TURF
 - iii. Which makes everybody around him deeply uncomfortable,
 - 1. They all refused to make room for Zach
 - 2. because he's exactly the kind of guy religious people avoid.
 - iv. But Jesus moves toward Zach anyway.
 - 1. And that welcome changes Zach's life
- i. *[GESTURE TOWARD CHAIR]* Sound familiar?
 - i. Welcome isn't just being nice. It's **intentional movement toward a person.**
 - 1. Even when it costs you something
- j. Here's what our culture tells us welcome means:
 - i. **Welcome people like you. People you feel comfortable with.**
 - ii. **Everyone else, keep at arm's length**
 - 1. to protect your comfort.
 - iii. Jesus does the opposite of every part of that.

1. He welcomes the guy the whole town has written off.
 - a. Not because Zacchaeus agreed with him yet.
 - b. Not because he'd cleaned up his life first.
- iv. Jesus went first. That's not our culture's version of welcome. That's God's.

6. TESTIMONY: WAYNE & JEANETTE

- a. I could keep talking about what this looks like. Or you could just watch it.
 - i. [9] Wayne and Jeanette Doerksen live this out really well —
 1. as a way of life, with their actual neighbors and with people who walk through our doors on Sundays.
- b. So I asked them to tell you about it themselves.
- c. (INVITE WAYNE & JEANETTE UP - 5 MIN TESTIMONY)
 - i. *What's it been like moving from living way out in the country in Arizona to living in heart of Manhattan?*
 - ii. *How have you gone about actually getting to know the people you live and work around? What does that look like in a normal week?*
 - iii. *What would you say to someone in this room who wants to live this way but doesn't know where to start?*
 - iv. (WHEN THEY FINISH) Thank you both.
 1. **That's not theory. That's Tuesday!**

7. Remember those pushpins you put on the map last Sunday?
 - a. Not just places — people.
 - b. **And discipleship doesn't start when someone walks in here on a Sunday morning.**
 - i. **It usually starts earlier.**
 - ii. In ordinary relationships.
 - c. [10] That's what the pathway is for. [POINT TO GRAPHIC]
 - i. **Neighbor. Guest. Friend.**
 - ii. A neighbor's someone God's already placed near you —
 1. like the ones Wayne and Jeanette just described.
 - iii. A guest is somebody who accepts an invitation.
 - iv. A friend is where attendance starts becoming belonging,
 1. because somebody knows their name,
 2. includes them, invites them into their life.
 - d. **And here's the deep vision behind that pathway:**

- i. If welcome only happens on Sundays at 10 a.m., it's not actually welcome — it's customer service!
 - ii. We want people to experience the actual welcome of Jesus and get helped toward their next step with him!
- e. **That means welcome isn't the greeters' job. Not the staff's job.**
 - i. It's **ours**. Introverts and Extroverts. Confident and Socially awkward
 - 1. Sunday mornings, and throughout the week!
 - 2. Sure it'll look different for each of us, lived out through our unique personalities and stories
 - ii. But every one of us has people God's already placed around us.
 - 1. **Every one of us can make room.**
- f. **This is an area we've been growing in as a church over the last few years**
 - i. I'm loving hearing the stories!
 - 1. Just this week, I heard how someone carrying a lot of church hurt said they finally felt like they could belong here. God is at work!
 - ii. And I know the Lord wants to keep growing us even more in our ability to deeply welcome for what he has in mind for Tru in this next season.

8. [11] APPLICATION: MAKE ROOM FOR SOMEONE

- a. Let me make this practical
- b. **WELCOME at church, on Sundays — this is what welcome actually looks like:**
 - i. **Sit somewhere new.**
 - ii. Sit *next to* the person sitting alone, don't just nod at them across the room.
 - iii. **Ask a name, and use it twice so it sticks.**
 - 1. And when you forget their name, just ask them again!
 - iv. **When someone visits us, I don't want them to just feel *tolerated*.**
 - 1. I don't want them to feel like a project, or like they walked into a room full of inside jokes they'll never get.
 - v. **I want them to feel genuinely *wanted* —**
 - 1. So much so that we'd **follow up** with them later in the week.
 - a. Or the next time they return on a Sunday
- c. [12] **WELCOME in your everyday life — same posture, different room.**
 - i. **Your neighbor** you wave at but have never had inside your house.
 - 1. Invite them in. Both figuratively and literally.
 - ii. **Your coworker** who's rough around the edges, That kid others avoid at lunch.
 - Sit with them. Ask them questions about their life

- iii. And a thousand other similar everyday ways.
- iv. Sometimes it's uncomfortable. But it's not complicated.

d. [13] My challenge for each of us today is to **invite someone.**

- i. **Into deeper relationship Or a church gathering**
 - 1. **This month.**
- ii. Think about your pushpin — the people God's already placed around you, like Wayne and Jeanette's neighbors.
 - 1. Not five. One. Before the end of September.
- iii. You don't have to give a speech, win an argument, or fix their life. You can simply say: "Come over for lunch."
 - 1. Or "come to church with me,"
 - 2. or "come to my LIFE Group,"
- iv. Then let God do what only God can do.
 - 1. **We make the room. The Spirit brings the transformation.**
- v. Right now, write down **one name**. Just one.
 - 1. The first person who came to mind. Don't overthink it. [PAUSE.]

e. [14] 1 John 4:19 says **We love because he first loved us.**

- i. Every single thing we're talking about today started with him, not with us.
- f. That means you're not responsible for their response.**
 - i. **You're responsible for faithfulness** — just like we talked about last week.
- g. Pray for them. Watch for the opening. And when it comes — invite them.

i. [WALK BACK TO CHAIR.]

h. When we started today, this chair wasn't available.

- i. My stuff was in the way.
- ii. Then we moved it. Somebody sat down. **We made room.**
- i. That's the picture I want you to take home.**
 - i. Every empty chair has a person behind it.
 - 1. A neighbor. A coworker. A kid.
 - ii. Somebody wondering, somewhere underneath everything else — *would anybody notice if I were here?*
 - iii. **What if God wants to use you to answer that?**

j. [15] Notice. Move. Make room. That's it.

- i. [GESTURE TO OPEN ARMS] Welcome means we make room for people.

k. [16] And here's what I want you to hear before we go: **you are welcome here.**

- i. Not because you've got it figured out. Not because you've earned your place.
- ii. **You are welcome here because Jesus welcomes you.**

1. **This is his house. And we're His family, after all**

- l. And so, if we're his people, we don't just want to be a Midwest-nice church.
 - i. We want to be a **deeply welcoming people** —

1. [17] who keep asking: **who can I welcome?**

2. **Who might God be asking me to help take their next step with him?**

- m. That's where this whole pathway starts: Not a diagram. Not a program. A person.

9. COMMUNION

a. [18] And in a minute, we're going to live that out together at this Communion Table.

b. Because **before we ever moved toward anybody else, Jesus moved toward us.**

c. Remember Zacchaeus — up in that tree, not expecting anybody to want him, let alone invite themselves over?

- i. Jesus looked up and said, "I'm coming to your house today."

d. So in a few minutes, as we eat the bread and the juice, I want you to remember —

- i. **you are welcome here, at this Table, and in this family of God,**

- ii. because Jesus welcomed you first.

- iii. **That's worth celebrating!**

e. We're going to do this a little differently today:

- i. We're going to come get the bread and the juice, then all take them together,

- ii. As a family. I'll walk you through it.

f. [INVITE PEOPLE TO COME FOR COMMUNION]

- i. **This bread reminds us of Jesus' body**, given for us

- 1. that Jesus loved us so much that he came and died for us,

- 2. and rose again so he could welcome us into his family

- 3. **[EVERYONE EATS the bread]**

- ii. **And the juice reminds us that Jesus' shed blood** for us makes a way for us to be completely welcomed into the presence of God Himself,

- 1. not based on our good behavior, but based on his!

- 2. So let's drink together in Glad celebration! **[EVERYONE DRINKS]**

10. PRAY



**WHEN'S A TIME YOU FELT
REALLY WELCOMED?**





YOU ARE WELCOME HERE

ROMANS 5:17, LUKE 19:1-10

WELCOME | EQUIP | SEND



— TRU.CHURCH —



WELCOME | EQUIP | SEND



**NEIGHBOR
GUEST
FRIEND**



**FAMILY
DISCIPLE
SERVANT**



**DISCIPLE
MAKER
LEADER
PLANTER**



— TRU.CHURCH —

WE WELCOME BECAUSE CHRIST WELCOMED US

Therefore **welcome** one another
as Christ has **welcomed** you, for the glory of God.

ROMANS 15:7 ^{ESV}



WELCOME MEANS WE MAKE ROOM



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WELCOME MEANS WE MAKE ROOM

⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

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TESTIMONY

Wayne & Jeanette Doerksen





WELCOME | EQUIP | SEND



**NEIGHBOR
GUEST
FRIEND**



**FAMILY
DISCIPLE
SERVANT**



**DISCIPLE
MAKER
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— TRU.CHURCH —

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CHALLENGE: INVITE SOMEONE THIS MONTH

...into deeper relationship or a church gathering.



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YOU ARE WELCOME HERE





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WHO CAN I WELCOME?

WHO MIGHT GOD BE ASKING ME TO HELP TAKE THEIR NEXT STEP WITH HIM?





YOU ARE WELCOME HERE

COMMUNION