



**Platte
Christian Reformed Church**

November 2018

“Invite Your Neighbor to Church...and to Your Living Room”

“Above all, love each other deeply...offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.”

– 1 Peter 4:8-9.

Just about a month ago, it was good to host a ‘bring your neighbor to church’ Sunday. There were visitors among us, and the fellowship and worship were sweet. I commend the church growth committee for stepping out and making an idea into reality and those of you who stepped out and made invites, even invites that were met with “Thanks, but no thanks.”

I do, however, have to add something to this. We ought regularly to be inviting friends or neighbors or family to church with us, but it falls short if we don’t regularly invite them into our living rooms and dining rooms. I would suggest that about the only way you’d possibly get someone who never goes to church to start showing interest in church and then even desiring to be a part of church begins in your living room. Author Rosaria Butterfield describes the role of hospitality this way: “using your Christian home in a daily way that seeks to make strangers neighbors, and neighbors into the family of God.”

With businesses or restaurants, we invite people and hope they become regular customers. Not so with the church. The church doesn’t just provide goods; the church is about relationships. Many people are terrified of stepping into a church, and even more so in Platte specifically with our church. That might surprise you, but I’ve heard it often. What is required, then, is to first build a trusting relationship. That happens in your home. People will have less motivation to come to your church if you don’t first welcome them into your home. To come into someone’s home is to be wanted. To be honored as a guest. They see in the place where you live that you aren’t perfect. You aren’t different from them, and yet they see the difference Jesus makes. One of our members put it to me like this: “before inviting them for church, we need to invite them for pie.” That’s exactly right, and we invite them not just to get them to church, but simply to know them and love them.

The passage quoted above, though, is directed primarily at believers. Hospitality ought to be the norm within the church. When I preached on this several weeks ago, I got more feedback than almost any other sermon I’ve ever preached (it is posted online if you missed that evening). The reason for this, I think, is that hospitality has become a lost art in our culture. Luxuries, events and travel have converted our homes from meeting places to know and serve guests into castles to seek refuge in TV and iPad and to finally catch our breath and sleep after running around like chickens with our heads cut off. The point of 1 Peter 4 was this: the time is short, but God’s gifts are many, so we ought to use both to love others with hospitality. And this is not about entertaining (impressing), but about serving (blessing).

A new book by U.S. Senator Ben Sasse of Nebraska argues, I think rightly, that our country’s angry climate is largely because we are starving for good face-to-face friendships and trusting relationships right where we live. We don’t know the people around us anymore. How much do you really know about the guy or gal sitting down the bench from you on Sunday? Sure, you know plenty *about* them (family tree, job, etc.), but do you *know* them (joys, struggles, stories)?

Hospitality is challenging, but it also fires me up because it can be the coolest and most enjoyable way the church sets itself apart from the world. All it requires, to start, is that you examine your heart and your calendar and think about what priorities govern your schedule. When we say “I’m too busy,” we actually mean, “that isn’t a priority.” Though blood family can easily get the only time we have for hospitality, let’s make room – say just one night a week or a month even – for church family. Use the directory to find people you don’t know well. If your house doesn’t work for hosting, invite someone to dinner or coffee and foot the bill. How great it would be if people responded to the question of what our church was like with the answer ‘hospitable.’ How great it would be if people who move into our church family or marry into our church family find that they can truly be ‘in,’ because they are invited into your living room or dining room.

This is all built upon the reality that God has taken us from being strangers to family. God met you as a rebel, and made you into His child. We are welcomed at His table and in His house, and He serves us the riches of His grace – everything we need for this life and the next. So let’s be quick to welcome neighbors into our own houses as well. The time is short, but His gifts are many.

Sincerely,

Pastor Drew

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FAMILY PRAYER NOTES

GENERAL PRAISES AND PRAYER REQUESTS:

- ◆ Pray for the upcoming mid-term elections this month. Ask God to give voters wisdom for decision-making and to raise up elected officials that serve our country well.
- ◆ Give **thanks** to God for the following:
 - ⇒ Harvest: praise God for a summer with abundant rain and then several weeks of dry weather to allow for harvesting in October.
 - ⇒ Peace: give thanks that we do not deal with the strife of war in our own backyards.
 - ⇒ Guidance: thank God for speaking to us in His Word and providing wisdom to navigate through life.
 - ⇒ Education: for the abundance of books and the gift of some of the world's best schools to be able to read and write well.
 - ⇒ Family: for children and grandchildren united by blood, and even more so, for church family united by faith in Jesus Christ for eternity.
 - ⇒ Community: for the Platte area and the farms, businesses and organizations that allow it to stay healthy.
 - ⇒ Grace: for the sacrifice and the resurrection of Jesus Christ that pays our debts and sets us free from sin and death.

Nursing Home Residents, Shut-ins and their Caretakers:

- ◆ Tony & Rozella Baan Hofman, Ted Bultsma, Kevin Burma, Gertie DeJong, Clair & Pearl Dyk, Marie Kok, Clarence Hunsucker, JoAnn Kuipers, Juna Meyerink, Helen Pheifer, Ruth Pranger, Cheryl Reed, Evelyn Severson, Harriet Sprik, Leona Van Dusseldorp, Muriel Van Vuren, and Betty Van Zee

Those Mourning the Loss of:

- ◆ Don Severson, Alfred VanZee, Jennie Bultsma, Darrell Kuipers, Harriett Brand, and Kevin Antonsen

Missionaries:

- ⇒ Ben & Amy Meyer (CRWM– Mexico)
- ⇒ Victor & Lori Selemanni (YWAM– Africa)
- ⇒ LaVeryl & Max Voss (Wycliffe– Papua New Guinea)
- ⇒ Calvin & Jessica Wunderink (TeachBeyond-Czech Republic)

Monthly Birthdays and Anniversaries

(to see church activities, please refer to our weekly bulletin, or to the online calendar at plattecrc.org for the most up-to-date information)

November Birthdays:

8: Don Wunderink (Missionary)
9: Athena Kraayenbrink
10: Everine Schipper
11: Gerald Kuipers
11: Tiffany Sybesma
19: Jaden Meyerink
19: Kolbe Dykshorn
20: Jessica Kaemingk
22: Josie Van Zee
23: Valarie Kuipers
23: Jevin Meyerink
26: Henrietta Sybesma
26: John Kuipers
26: Kahne Dykshorn
28: Jodi Kuipers
28: Ron Van Zee

November Anniversaries:

13: Larry & Jan Hansum
24: Ron & Jan Van Zee
30: Curtis & Tiffany Sybesma

Please let the church office know if there are any birthdays or anniversaries that we've missed! Call 337-3572, or email: plattecrc@gmail.com