

First United Methodist Church

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An ongoing need in our church, and any church, is to find leadership to help provide guidance and direction for the various ministries that allow our church to function and make a difference in our community and world. What you may not realize is that everyone who participates in the life of our church is an automatic part of at least one particular ministry. Let me explain.

Most people who come through the doors of our facility are looking for a place to belong – a place to feel accepted. Helping people feel connected or accepted is something that every one of us can do...not just the pastors or the paid staff. This is why our Hospitality Team is making such a big push of helping everyone understand they are a part of our church's greater "hospitality team." This summer I had an experience that drove this point home.

During vacation time when Nancy and I were away from Mitchell, we, along with some other family members, attended a church in the town we were camping near. We walked into the building and there was no one there to welcome us. There were two greeters but they were off to the side visiting. They both glanced our way but then went back to visiting. Yes, I did feel sort of ignored. So, we moved further into the building and stopped in the hallway, standing there for a bit while restroom stops were made. No one approached us.

When we were finally all reassembled, we headed toward the sanctuary. Again, there was no one present to provide welcome or guidance. So, we headed toward an empty pew. I looked and other people did have bulletins, so I told everyone to go sit down and I headed back to get bulletins. I looked around for them but couldn't find any. Finally, I saw a container off to the side that had paper in it. Yep, that was the bulletins. I grabbed what I needed and headed back to the rest of the family.

I won't go any further, but let's just say the sense of welcome I received in that church wasn't particularly positive...or welcoming. The most helpful instruction I've heard to help a church consider hospitality is, "Are you doing things to show that you are expecting guests?" My feeling at that church on that particular morning was...no, they were not expecting guests.

I'm sure there are those who, from time to time, leave our church after a worship service feeling as though they were not noticed or prepared for. That thought saddens me. But that is also why I am so excited about what the Hospitality Team in our church is doing. We are striving to grow our ministries of Ushering, Greeting, Refreshments and Hosting, etc. And we are hearing good comments of how people are feeling welcomed, accepted, and included. But always remember, each of you are a part of the greater hospitality team of our church, and it begins by each of us taking the time to go up to someone and say, "Hi, I'm _____. It is so good to see you today.... And then see where the conversation takes you. Thanks to all for your help to make others feel welcome and at home at Downtown Mitchell First United Methodist Church.

Serving Together,

Pastor Keith

Hey, this Sunday is the Third Sunday of the month. That means its **Children's Project "Noisy Bucket" time**. The September and October Project for the children is the Domestic Violence Shelter here in Mitchell. They have many important programs that help children. This is where the Noisy Bucket money will go – to help children in difficult situations. Remember, Worship is at 8:30 and 11:00 am on Sunday morning. Sunday School is at 9:45 am. We have our **Wednesday Midweek Worship** service at 6:00 pm. Come join us!!!