

BLESSINGS ALWAYS
June 25, 2020
Association Minister Message
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HOSPITALITY. Jesus says, *"Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me."* This is rather an amazing statement. Jesus urges His disciples to practice HOSPITALITY, welcoming, including, reaching out...not something spectacular, heroic or great. Even the offering a cup of cold water, Jesus implies, *"to one of the little ones..."* is an act of HOSPITALITY. It is reaching out to the stranger and the outsider and bringing them into the family of God. A clergy friend said, *"We, who were strangers and outsiders, are included in God's family."* We all desire to be faithful disciples of Jesus. It is difficult to be HOSPITABLE to others during this time of fear and isolation. Many are not being careful or following protocols and there is an uptick in covid cases. How does one practice extravagant welcome when there is suspicion that covid might invade *"my"* space? It is not just *"the little ones"* who need water. There are folks who look different or have a different color or who speak differently than we are accustomed who are to be included in our welcome. Many observers of our society have concluded that we live in a nation of strangers. Walls have been built between people. Racism continues to make us uneasy because someone is different than me or us or any special interest group. We live in a time that preaches *"self-protection"* or *"my rights"* or *"my..."* I lived in a neighborhood that one of my neighbors said she did not know the family across the street who had lived in the neighborhood for over 25 years. HOSPITALITY. In an uncaring world, a world where many receive only rebuke and rejection, our little, unspectacular acts of kindness and open generosity can make all the difference. Several years ago there was a campaign that expressed *"Practice Random Acts of Kindness."* That is HOSPITALITY, but for Christians acts of kindness are not random. Jesus has given us a glimpse of the world as God created it to be. It is not this uncaring, walled-off, separated and exclusive place where people who seem different are a threat or a nuisance. It is a world where there is kindness, mercy and respect for all God's children. Christ invites ALL to His Table of love. Here we find HOSPITALITY, both human and divine.