



The First Word

THE PASTOR'S PEN

(Disciples of Christ)



July 25th, 2018

Welcome is a big word. *Welcome* is an important word. *Welcome* is a spiritual word.

I can honestly say that Stephanie and I have been made to feel welcome here at First Christian Church, but I would be surprised had that not been the case. Extending welcome is part of who we are and how we understand we are to serve God.

A church I know well says "we are a servant church *welcoming* all persons to the journey of knowing and experiencing God's love and grace."

Our Disciples Identity statement says, "We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. As part of the one body of Christ we *welcome* all to the Lord's Table as God has *welcomed* us."

Romans 15:7 underscores the ministry of hospitality, "*Welcome* one another, therefore, just as Christ has *welcomed* you, for the glory of God."

I can still recall while on vacation a few years back I worshiped in a nearby church (not a Disciples church) and being given the message we are glad you are here for worship, but you are not a member of this church thus you can't take communion. The welcome turned out to be hollow.

It is good for us to ask, how welcoming are we and is there any way to improve our potential for being a welcoming church? I am reminded of the quaint little statement "They won't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

As a church it is our call and privilege to be graceful enough to invite, inform and include new people. We are blessed to share the joy of loving and serving together as sisters and brothers in Christ.

Grace and peace,

Don McLaughlin

