

Holy Welcome

June 28, 2026

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Green

Matthew 10:40-42

When I first began living on my own, my mother would ask if my kitchen was stocked with treats for those who dropped by unexpectedly. Was there coffee? Tea? Cream and sugar for the coffee and tea? Cookies?

My answer was always “no,” to which she would sigh in exasperation, “But you have to have cookies.”

I was living on an assistant editor’s salary in Manhattan. The thought of spending money on “extravagant” extras for those phantom guests was ludicrous to me. Even more ludicrous was my mother thinking that any stash of cookies would survive uneaten in my cupboards.

Perhaps it was that missing Martha Stewart gene in me that kept my cupboards empty of treats for others. Perhaps it was my mom’s deep-seated generational belief that good manners meant feeding someone at the spur of the moment.

Whatever it was, I do not deny that hospitality is important — and biblical. For in the breaking of the bread, humanity’s differences give way to a truth that connects us all: We are hungering for belonging, which begins with a welcome.

Jesus once told his friends that whoever welcomes them, welcomes him. And so, welcoming is a powerful, holy act that we often fail to see as such.

Think about a time when your schedule was interrupted by an unexpected visitor. You probably felt annoyed. But afterward you realized how that encounter was a blessing, turning your day — and attitude — around.

Now think back to a time when you called on someone without notice and were given a chilly hello and swift good-bye. How did that make you feel?

The reality is that we are all standing on proverbial welcome mats praying that the door before us opens to a place of acceptance — a place that tells us in the welcoming, that we are not only seen, but that our existence matters.

Such a welcome doesn’t have to be extravagant. It doesn’t even require having coffee and cookies on hand in the pantry. (Sorry, mom.) A simple cup of cold water to one of God’s little ones is meaningful, Jesus points out.

St. David of Wales had a motto in life and that was “do the little things.” On his deathbed in the 6th century, he reminded his monks to keep offering small acts of love, for those are the acts that make the world a better place.

Our holy welcomes are acts of love we can show others. And the good news is that our spiritual pantries are already stocked. We have the presence of ourselves to give both stranger and friend.

Loving God, at the very start of creation You saw that humans should not be alone. We were meant to be there for one another, to slow down and show up for the one who is needing to know they are not invisible. May today we find those holy moments to connect with our siblings. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today’s *Sunday Bulletin*.)