



Wednesday Prayer

4th Sunday after Pentecost – Welcoming

“Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.” Matthew 10:40-42

In the ancient world, welcoming people into your home and community went beyond polite hospitality. It was a moral obligation in a harsh environment of the Middle East, where heat and the desert landscape offered few options for food and water. Welcoming someone into your home could mean the difference between life and death.

Hospitality is still a significant value in some parts of the world, but I don’t think we see it so much in our world of middle-class America. Instead of sharing our abundance, a mindset of scarcity causes us to hold on to what we have and assume that people can find help “somewhere else”. Our individualistic society has systemically reinforced the message that those who can’t pay their own way are somehow weak or flawed, and people who are different from us should be shunned or attacked. We refer to ourselves as “one nation under God” but fail to listen to these words of Jesus that call us as disciples to be welcoming. Look up the words of author and composer Marty Haugen ([Evangelical Lutheran Worship #641](#)) and sing about building a house where all can safely live, where the love of Christ can end divisions, and we welcome all.

The mission of Cherish All Children is all about welcoming. We welcome God into our hearts through prayer. We welcome children and youth into our fellowship and offer a safe sanctuary and the gospel message of hope and grace. We welcome our communities into our ministry through education and advocacy. We understand that the act of welcoming is still a matter of life and death, especially for those who are marginalized, or who are vulnerable to or recovering from exploitation and sex-trafficking. We need to continue to be counter-cultural and return to the ancient practice of welcoming, offering the cup of cold water to the little ones who are parched and thirsty in a harsh world.

Welcoming and gracious God, you welcomed us into your family through baptism. As your children, your disciples, move us to offer a compassionate welcome and a cup of cold, sustaining water to all who thirst for your saving word. Compel us to live lives of prayer, education and advocacy, especially for those drawn up in sex trafficking, so that all can feel your loving, welcoming embrace. Amen.

Written by Kay Kinkel, MA, MSW, a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker and Mental Health Therapist and an Advisory Board member with Cherish All Children.