

Friends

Spring has sprung and some of you may have been spring cleaning. The manse family has – always a big mission for us as we use the opportunity to take stock of our rooms and our family. Is everyone in the right space for them at the moment? This year, it has occasioned a significant upheaval as we re-allocate bedrooms to make sense of the growing family. One of the joys of spring cleaning is that we think about hosting, and inviting visitors into our newly organised space. The improving weather makes us wonder about the state of the barbecue and I start to think less about cake and more about salad. (Not really!)

In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul strongly encourages the urge to offer hospitality, opening the 13th chapter like this: “Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.”

The second Celtic Daily Prayer Book from Lindisfarne quotes an ancient Celtic welcome, found over the door of an old inn in Wales, in connection with this passage:

Hail guest, we ask not what thou art;

If friend, we greet thee, hand and heart;

If stranger, such no longer be;

If foe, our love shall conquer thee.

Whenever anyone walks newly across our threshold and joins us for Sunday worship, we try to live those words. We don't do it consciously, many of you will not have come across these words before reading them right now for the first time, but nevertheless, that is what we are trying to do when we speak our words of welcome, and ask where the visitor is from, and would they like coffee, and how have they found us?

I take them as an encouragement then, to take these words to heart and to intentionally live them as we welcome visitors and newcomers alike to our churches over the next few weeks of lament and celebration.

God bless, Vicci