

Matthew 18:1-10 NRSV

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"² He called a child, whom he put among them,³ and said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.⁴ Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.⁵ **Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.**

⁶ "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea.⁷ Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to the one by whom the stumbling block comes!⁸ "If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than to have two hands or two feet and to be thrown into the eternal fire.⁹ And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into the hell of fire.

¹⁰ "Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven.

Matthew 25:31-46 NRSV

³² "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory.³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats,³³ and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

³⁴ Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?'⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

⁴¹ Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels;⁴² for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?'⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

The Values of St. Andrew UMC

Last week, we looked at the first two values of Abundant Grace and Unexpected Extra. In this All In series, we are identifying values that have defined St. Andrew UMC in the past and also values that we hope will define St. Andrew in the future. Values are those things that are at the core of our being. They are not always specific actions that we do, but these values infuse everything that we do.

"A Ministry that Rocks

When Ann Mowery began her pastorate in a small, rural congregation in Missouri, attendance ran about 100 with a mix of ages, mostly older adults. After seven years, the attendance now regularly reaches 150 or more, and the congregation has built a new dining area and has renovated the youth room. The secret has been an active hospitality that has become contagious throughout the congregation. For instance, when a visiting mom felt self-conscious whenever her baby started to fuss during worship, Ann met with congregational leaders and they decided that they valued having young people so highly that they had to do something to ease the discomfort. To show support for the young mom, they bought a comfortable, well-padded rocking chair and placed it just behind the last pew of the small sanctuary. Word got around, and soon they had to have two more rocking chairs to accommodate the moms who found the congregation to be the friendliest around! Rocking chairs for moms, a cool-looking youth room for young people, a new extension that makes the building handicapped accessible – the pastor and the congregation use these to help communicate the priority they place on welcoming more and younger people."

From *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* by Bishop Robert Schnase

This week we talk about our value of:

Radical Hospitality

In his book, *Five Practices*, Bishop Schnase identifies the five practices that define vital congregations. The first of those practices is Radical Hospitality.

Bishop Schnase says on his blog

www.fivepractices.org that

"Congregations that practice *Radical hospitality* demonstrate an active desire to invite, welcome, receive, and care for those who are strangers so that they find a spiritual home and discover for themselves the unending richness of life in Christ. *Radical* describes that which is drastically different from ordinary practices, outside the normal, that which exceeds expectations and goes the second mile."

The church is called to be radical in its hospitality because we are called to be different than the rest of the world.

Hospitality is often seen as a gift. In my family, hospitality is an Olympic Sport. My mother is the youngest of four sisters, each of whom at times seems to try to out-do the others in their attempts at Radical Hospitality. One thanksgiving when my brother and I were coming home from school, my mother decided to make our favorite dessert – pumpkin pie. But she didn't make just one pumpkin pie; my mother made 13 pies and we ate every last one.

For my mother, simple hospitality wasn't enough. It wasn't enough for my mother to provide an expected thanksgiving dinner. My mother wanted us to be so sure of our welcome at home that she made a radical decision – she would make as many pies as we would eat and to this day I remember this story and I remember that no matter what, I am welcome at home. My mother's radical hospitality tells me that no matter where I am, I am welcome at home.

When we practice Radical Hospitality at St. Andrew, we are telling people that no matter where they are, they will find a home at our church. **All are welcome to come home.**

Jesus had this radical orientation. Look at the Matthew chapter above; the disciples wanted to know “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” Rather than expound on a large treatise or theory, Jesus does something both very simple and unexpected. He places a child in their midst and says that we must become like little children.

Little children?!? How are adults supposed to become like little children? One key is the hierarchical assumptions of the ancient world where children were not placed in great esteem. Adults came before children. So to become like a child is to reverse that system – it is to put children before adults. Jesus finishes that thought by saying that whoever welcomes a child in Jesus’ name welcomes Jesus.

Jesus reverses the paradigm.

Greatness is not about our own importance, but the importance of others.

This is also seen in the 25th chapter of Matthew with the famous parable of the sheep and the goats. Those who take care of the sick and provide food and drink for the stranger are the ones that enter heaven. This seems to be a powerful message that we are to take care of those who are weak, strangers, sick, etc...

But Jesus takes it further. Just as in the 10th chapter, Jesus places himself in the unlikely position. Jesus says that whatever we Christians do for the least of these, we do for him.

Jesus has done something radical in both of these passages; Jesus says that we who follow him are to treat children, strangers, the hungry, and the sick, as if THEY were Jesus. In fact, as if THEY were GOD.

Radical Hospitality is how we at St. Andrew act when someone comes into our church. We treat them as if they were God.

What would you do to welcome God?

How radical would you be to welcome Jesus? If he were to walk through the doors of St. Andrew, how far would you go to welcome him?

The Privileges of Church Membership

When you get a credit card, there are “privileges” to signing up for that credit card. You are able to get tickets to certain concerts or further rewards like airline miles or gift cards to your favorites stores.

Airlines have also taken this track, they have rewards programs, “privileges” for those who fly a lot on their particular airline. Membership in a program like this has rewards.

Membership in the church has “privileges,” but they are unlike the privileges of any worldly group. When you join the church, you have the privilege of tithing. When you join the church, you have the privilege of serving in a food pantry and the privilege of parking across the street. In the world, membership normally means ownership. Here, membership means service.

When I first started working at St. Andrew, I parked in a spot close to the door near my office in the east wing. I came to church and for the first week parked in an empty spot near the church.

I did that until I found out that Robert Hasley (Sr. Pastor), Steve Robertson (Executive Pastor), Scott Engle (Teaching Pastor) and even Dan Smith (Media)

parked across the street and walked to St. Andrew. I discovered that they knew one of Jesus' secrets – that every time they parked across the street, they were leaving another spot open for Jesus. Every step they took was a step on behalf of God because God walks into our church every day and every week.

Radical Hospitality might be the most important aspect of helping St. Andrew grow and reach a new generation for Christ. This Sunday, keep your eye open to how you can be privileged to show radical hospitality to someone else. Keep an eye out for God. He will be walking through the doors any second.

The All-In Prayer

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, wrote this prayer and called it a "covenant prayer." We believe that each of us are called to be passionate servants – to be All-In for God. We begin that process by opening us up to the Holy Spirit through prayer. We are asking all of those at St. Andrew to pray this prayer every day during this series and see how God might use us when we are willing to be "All-In"

I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering,
Let me be employed for thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low for thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.
And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
thou art mine, and I am thine.
So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven.
Amen.

For this Sermon Series, we ask you to pray this prayer every day and ask ourselves, what might this world look like if we All Went All In?

Questions for Discussion and Reflection

Here is the idea: We are all called to live out Christ's values in this world. St. Andrew lives out those values in a particular way, that we have defined as Abundant Grace, Unexpected Extra, Radical Hospitality, and Can-Do Confidence. These values have defined us and hopefully will continue to define us even more as we live into our next 25 years.

Radical Hospitality: The notion is that God walks through our doors every day. God, as a child, or as someone hungry, or as a stranger, walks through our doors looking for hope – looking for a home. St. Andrew is not called just to be hospitable or nice. We are called to exercise Radical Hospitality – to go out of our way to make St. Andrew home for those that walk through the doors.

How is God calling you to live out Radical Hospitality?

Would you consider parking across Plano Parkway?

Have you gotten to know the person sitting right next to you in the pews?

Daily Bible Readings

Before reading each passage, take a few minutes to get a sense of the context. Your study bible should help. Jot down a few questions that come to mind from your reading of the passage.

<p>Monday, Titus 1:1-9 The requirements of a Bishop. Try switching out “members of St. Andrew” for elder and Bishop.</p>	<p>Tuesday, Hebrews 13:1-3 – The call to hospitality, even to those in prison.</p>
<p>Wednesday, John 13:1-17 Jesus’ washes his disciples feet</p>	<p>Thursday, Romans 12 Paul’s overview of expectations for Christians</p>
<p>Friday, 1 John 3:16-17 Jesus provides the example for radical love and our radical hospitality</p>	<p>Weekly Joys and Concerns</p>

Scott's Tuesday Lunchtime Class

We meet at 11:45 in room 127 on Tuesdays.

We will not meet this week as Scott is leading a trip to the Holy Land.

When we return, we invite you to join us whenever you can.

Bring a study Bible.

Young Adult Fall Schedule

- Mondays Nov 7, 14, 21, 28, and Dec 5, 12, Bible Study at 2600 Ventura Dr Apt 822. 7pm.
- Saturday, Nov 12th, Habitat for Humanity, email dfenwick@standrewumc.org to sign up
- Friday, Dec 9th, Young Adult Christmas Party. 7005 Windhaven Parkway #12, The Colony, TX.

For Questions, please e-mail ajones@standrewumc.org or call at 214.291.8018.

Sermon Notes