

## Hospitality

Wednesday, September 13, 2023

Written by Our Music Director, Scott Hayes

“Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers” (Romans 12:13)

Many of you may not be aware, but alongside my role as a church musician, I have dedicated over 20 years to a professional career as an organ builder. Although the majority of my time is committed to the music ministry at All Saints, I also maintain a limited involvement in pipe organ projects throughout the country.

During the Labor Day weekend, a few friends and I embarked on a journey in a moving van to Richlands, Virginia, with the purpose of relocating a small pipe organ. The organ's original owners had sold their church building to another congregation. The new owners had no use for the organ, and no idea of how to go about finding a solution. My little crew worked hard – and the organ was essentially disassembled by lunch time.

We decided to grab lunch at the Subway located across the street, and to our surprise, the Pastor's daughter kindly offered, 'Do you need any assistance with loading the truck?' Given the upcoming five-hour drive ahead of us (with three full-grown men in the front of a moving truck), I gladly accepted her offer. When we returned from lunch, we found that she had rallied approximately five parishioners who were eager to assist us with the packing.

Not only was this remarkable and incredibly helpful, but it was also clear that their church family was tightly knit in a special way. They brought their whole families to witness the spectacle of the instrument being loaded onto the truck. As time went by, food started appearing, children played in the yard, and the elder members observed from the pews, asking questions about the organ as we went. It was clear that they had decided to turn the afternoon into a festive occasion.

We certainly felt a bit out of place among people from different religious and social backgrounds, but their hospitality left a lasting impression on us. In a town far from home and surrounded by strangers, they made us feel truly welcome, which is no small feat!

The verse from Romans mentioned above was a part of our service on September 3. Paul continues by instructing us to 'Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be arrogant, but associate with the humble; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but consider what is noble in the sight of all.' Hospitality, as Paul explains, goes beyond simply offering tea and cookies to visitors. It's an ongoing commitment, whether it's with people we've known for years or those we've just met.

As we settle into our routines this fall, I encourage you to seek opportunities to practice hospitality. How can you serve a friend or neighbor on a daily basis? In what ways can you demonstrate and share God's love through a ministry of hospitality? And within our church community, is there a specific area where you feel called to serve?

Of course, the big question on my mind is, what precisely should I do with that pipe organ? We'll have to stay tuned to find out...