



A Sermon preached in Christ Church, Grosse Pointe, Michigan
by The Reverend Andrew Van Culin, *Rector*

The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
28 June, 2026

In the Name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I want to say I've prepared my remarks for the gospel this morning. However, we must take note of the final verse of Jeremiah's passage. As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes true then it will be known that the Lord has truly sent the prophet. It is Jeremiah's way of proclaiming that the heart of God stands with the heart of peace. We will see over the course of time that God stands for the way of uprightness and care for the vulnerable, which times demands even as Jesus does, standing between those who bring violence in defense of those who are downtrodden. You think of the story of the woman who's caught in adultery in which Jesus stands firmly between her and her accusers.

But Jeremiah is not the true desire of God, but rather peace. And so when we see that day come, we will know that the prophet is truly of God. God's hope is always peace among all of God's people, which is to say that God's hope is not just for you and me as Christians, but for all people of God's creation, which is the world.

But that is not the heart of my message today. I want us to look more substantively at the passage from Matthew. I see in it two invitations, one very overt and one I think equally profound if more subtly presented. So of course we see the invitation to hospitality, the invitation to welcome, to be one who welcomes another, recognizing that when we do, we are also welcoming in Christ and if we welcome in Christ, we are welcoming God the Father into our lives. That act of hospitality is the hospitality of our hands. It is the hospitality that opens our lives to another, that opens literally a door or hands out as the passage concludes, a little water to a parched soul or friend.

Hospitality and welcome is the opening up of our lives. The extension of our care to another, not just those who are near and dear to us, our sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, or our friends and neighbors that we know, but to strangers. Even, dare I say, people that antagonize us and anger us. The invitation is broad that we welcome one another and in so doing welcome Christ. That I think



we see overtly in this passage. But there's another invitation that's not simply about opening our hands and our lives but about opening our hearts and our minds to the other as well. So, a little spoiler. I hope you've all had ... I know you've all had enough time to watch Ted Lasso. So I'm going to give like a four-year-old spoiler and if you don't know if it is truly a spoiler, that's on you, not on me.

So in the first year of Ted Lasso, there's this wonderful scene. I don't know which episode it is, but it's towards the end of the season, if not the culmination of the season. It's in the bar. Ted is the new coach of a football team in England, wrong football from his perspective. He was a football American football coach, now coaching a soccer team in England. Doesn't know much about the sport, but he does know a little bit about leadership. And so he's in this bar and one of the owners challenges him to a game of darts. They've got a significant wager on the line, and they get to the final round of darts. Ted's up. He's trailing significantly. And he says to Rupert, the owner, "I've always been underestimated by people. I used to take it personally until I realized that they didn't really know me.

They just judged me.

I encourage you. " I'm not quoting this directly so forgive me. I encourage you to be curious, not judgmental. If you had been curious, you wouldn't have asked me, "Do I like darts?" I said, "They're okay." If you were really curious, you would have asked me, "Have I ever played or do I play darts much, which I would have told you from every Sunday from the time I was 10 to the time I was 16 with my dad until he passed away. And during this scene, Ted shoots a triple 20, a triple 20 and a bullseye to win the contest. It's a wonderful scene, but it's curiosity that I want us to be attentive to. You see, curiosity is the opening of our hearts and the opening of our minds to another and it's there in curiosity that we go further than what welcome does.

You see, it's in curiosity that we begin to see Christ in the other, to whom we are offering our hospitality and welcome. Now, don't get me wrong. Welcome and hospitality are essential. That act of kindness is beautiful and good, but curiosity takes it a step further. It's the place that we encounter consciously the Christ that is in another. When we begin to ask, what are your passions? When we begin to ask, what are your insights and gifts? What are the things that keep you up at night, the things that are on your heart that worry you?

We begin to uncover the Christ in another. Staying on the movie themes for a moment, probably not a spoiler because I don't have as much to say about it, but Moneyball, another great film, which apparently sports movie day as well. Moneyball, this wonderful story of Billy Bean and the Oakland



A's when they were turning themselves around in the early 2000s and transforming the game of baseball over the last 20-25 years. The wonderful scene between Brad Pitt's character, Billy Bean and Peter Brand, an unknown wonk in the Mets organization, a 20-something kid just out of Harvard School of Economics.

And yet in this scene, Billy Bean sees the Mets GM look at this little kid for direction. So after the scene, he takes Peter Brand out into the parking lot and says, "Who are you?" And he says a little bit, he says, "No, no, no. Who are you? Why are they looking at you?" Billy Bean was curious. Who is this kid? What gift does he have? What insight does he have? What can I learn from him in this case about baseball that nobody else is seeing? So, the spoiler, he brings Peter Brand onto his staff and the A's and transform again the A's in baseball. Curiosity, right? Curiosity is the thing that unlocks another person to us, reveals another person. It can be a mother, it can be a father, it can be a husband or spouse or partner. It can be a son or daughter.

It can be a stranger or a colleague, but they're in the question, who are you?

What are you passionate about? What do you worry about? What gifts do you bring to me and to the world? We begin to uncover the Christ in them as a gift of opening our hearts as well as our hands. And there's one other side to that curiosity and that's reflective curiosity. You see, just as Christ is in you and I am challenged to come and discover Christ in you, it reminds me that Christ also is in me. So a little curiosity about ourselves. What am I passionate about? What gifts do I truly bring? May help me to see that I have a gift of Christ to reveal to the world that I am hiding or perhaps hoarding for myself, that I can share more generously and more abundantly. Curiosity is this wonderful gift that we've been given, a way to uncover and connect, not only to connect with another, but to uncover the goodness within them and within ourselves.

Christ reminds us of the power and gift of hospitality, the opening of our hands and our lives to our neighbor. He also invites us to see in them and to see within ourselves the image of Christ that connects us all. May we be both hospitable and curious. Amen.