



April 28, 2024

Church Rising

Part Four: Welcome Home

Deuteronomy 10:12-22

Review

Highland *rising* with Jesus into greater life-vitality

All In! Baseline Checklist of **Time** (Sun AM), **Talent** (Drummer Boy Offering), **Treasure** (Give Something)

The Up, In, & Out ecosystem of Highland Lake (see opposite side)

“Up”: pressing intentionally into prayer

“In”: sustainable care net that results from organic layers of relationship that deepen thru off-Sunday connections

Today: being intentional about welcoming the newcomer

Welcoming the Stranger: a defining aspect of the Christian Way

A sign of the true sheep: welcoming the stranger, the incognito Jesus: Matt 25:35, 43

A test for the people of God: the incognito dignitary: Hebrews 13:2

Hearkens back to the three visitors to Abraham (Gen 18) and the two visitors to Lot in Sodom (Gen 19)

Which lays the groundwork for the future identity of Abraham’s offspring, Israel, as a welcoming people

Along with the 400 years’ slavery in Egypt

Welcome the stranger, *for you were once a stranger*: Deuteronomy 10:18-19

Which is rooted in the idea of loving your neighbor as yourself: Leviticus 19:33

Which Jesus pairs with loving God as the two greatest commandments that sum up the Law: Mark 12:28-31

Application at Highland

A safe, loving place to come while figuring things out

Encountering the living Jesus: not because of kindness but because of safety

Welcome breaker #1: self-absorption (not seeing, not noticing, distracted, seeking personal needs)

Welcome breaker #2: avoidance or resistance rooted in fear (usually fear of change)

- General atmosphere of kind reception, intentional “seeing”
- Explanation of actions, being careful of insider language, avoiding fellowship time
- Welcome Team members: see Cindy Reed
- Welcome Gift Bags: baked good, craft good, and homemade cards: see Louise Conner
- Easy access to information: the coming new website and the Highland Church App
 - “Next step places”: second hour activities, Tuesday/ThuBible Study, Thursday Morning Prayer, formal events (retreat, fellowship dinners), come alongs
 - Opportunities to serve with us: Preschool, Highland Middle, Foodbank, special projects