

Heartbeat

Hospitality or Service?

By Pastor Scott Roberts

What is hospitality? What is service? I have been thinking about these two ways of serving a lot recently. Coming to the right understanding of them is important because the way that service plays out in church ministry is necessarily different and leads to different outcomes.

For those practicing hospitality, the focus is on the other person: the desire to make them comfortable, the desire to extend the relationship, the desire is to ensure that the needs of the person are met so that they will open up and enjoy fellowship. Hospitality is necessarily person-centered and seeks to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere conducive to socializing. This means the hospitable person will not be in a hurry to move people along or clean up the mess. Rather, they will be seeking to foster genuine conversation amongst people. Therefore, hospitality generally lacks any sense of time or concern for time.

But service is a very different gift. While hospitality is person-centered, service is need-centered. The person who serves is often concerned with a concrete situation that needs to be remedied. Servants are often found doing deeds: cleaning, fixing, running errands, driving people to appointments, or making and delivering meals. While the servant isn't antisocial, the focus of the servant is not on facilitating a relationship but on meeting the need of a person in a specific time allotment. Servants may be very generous with their time, but time and task are more prominent issues for the servant than they are for the person of hospitality.

It is tempting to think that one is better than the other. But that is wrong. Both are genuinely good, and both are essential to the development and growth of a church. But the struggle often comes when those who are

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servants find themselves in ministries that need people of hospitality or those who are hospitable find themselves in ministries that need servants. The time or people orientation is what makes it maddening for those in the wrong type of ministry, which leads to an interesting question: Are people prone to one or the other? Probably, but the point isn't to only do that which is most natural to a person. The point is to recognize the difference between the expectations of the two and then to understand when a shift in behavior is required based on the situation at hand. The hospitable person can serve, and the servant can be hospitable if one simply recognizes that a different focus or priority must take precedence. Knowing when the task or the person is most important can aid one in determining what should be prioritized.

So, which type of helper is needed and when? For something like janitorial services or kitchen cleanup, we need servants who come in after the event is finished to take care of the task of restoring order to temporal things. When a potluck is planned, or a set of meals are needed for the sick, we need servants to bring the vittles. But for something like the social hour before and after a service, or the time during a potluck, for the welcoming of visitors and new attendees, for a hospital visit or an elder visit, we need people who practice hospitality and are more interested in developing relationships with others. They will keep the food and drinks flowing to grease the wheels of conversation. There are times when it is necessary to complete a task, and there are times when the goal is to foster life and friendship. The healthy church (and Christian) will understand when each is needed and will adjust appropriately.

Additionally, each type of helper has an opportunity to incorporate others into the body of Christ. The servant, by watching out for others who might like to serve similarly, can invite people to join in the work. The invitation may be for partnership in a task or for taking on a solo task. Every type of work, whether in the area of serving or the area of hospitality should be a part of reaching out to others and helping them find their place in the community.

We read in 1Corinthians 10:31, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." This includes hospitality and service. Our actions and relationships are to be guided by the overarching desire to make God's name great in the eyes of others. We want people that are new to the congregation to see the welcoming and embracing arms of Christ displayed in our love for others. At the same time, we want every task that is accomplished to be completed as an act of worship that displays a heart of servanthood and humility. So, regardless of your natural inclinations – hospitality or service – may God be glorified in both.

The Horror of Eritrea: Three More Christian Prisoners

By Elizabeth Kendal



Submitted By Rebekah Roberts

BACKGROUND: In September 2001 the Eritrean government closed all private media. It then rounded up its critics – members of parliament, senior government officials and independent journalists – and silenced them; many simply disappeared. In May 2002 the Eritrean government officially closed all churches other than the Eritrean Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Mekane Yesus (Evangelical Lutheran) denominations. Initially those most impacted belonged to the country’s now-banned Protestant mission churches whose congregations have grown and multiplied. In 2004, after Orthodox leaders criticised regime policy, persecution spread to the Orthodox Church. In 2019, after Catholic leaders criticised regime policy for the second time, persecution spread to the Catholic Church as the regime seized its medical clinics and started a process of seizing its schools.

CATHOLIC BISHOP AND TWO PRIESTS ARRESTED

On 11 October 2022 Eritrean security agents detained Abba (Father) Mihretab Stefanos, the parish priest of St Michael’s Church in Segheneyti, a town some 60km south-east of the capital Asmara, in Eritrea’s Debub/Southern Region. Significantly, Awate.com reports (19 Oct 2022) that the regime recently confiscated the St Michael Elementary school in Segheneyti. On 12 October the regime detained Abba Abraham Habtom Gebremariam, the deputy parish priest in charge of students at the Capuchin Society in Teseney, a market town some 530km west of Asmara in Eritrea’s western Gash-Barka Region. Then, on 15 October, Abune (His Excellency) Fikremariam Hagos, the first Bishop of the Catholic Eparchy (diocese) of Segheneyti, was arrested at Asmara International Airport as he returned from a visit to Europe. A source told Catholic media that the three Catholics stand accused of highlighting Eritrea’s human rights abuses in their homilies/sermons. Sources believe that all three Catholics are being held at the notorious Adi Abeito prison on the northern outskirts of Asmara.

Since the religious repression was launched in May 2002, many thousands of Eritrean Christians (mostly Protestants) have endured incarceration because of their faith. Some leading Christians arrested in 2004 remain incarcerated to this day, including Pastor Haile Naigzhi, a leader in Eritrea’s Full Gospel/Kale Hiwot Church; Dr Kiflu Gebremeskel, a leading figure in the Full Gospel Church of Eritrea and chair of the Eritrean Evangelical



Catholic bishop Abune Fikremariam Hagos, arrested 15 Oct 2022.

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Why Celebrate Advent?

By Jerry H, Worship Team



What is Advent and why do we observe it? Advent (“coming” in Latin) is the period on the church calendar when Christians prepare for the celebration of Christ’s birth on Christmas. According to church historians, it probably began around 500 A.D. Advent season includes the four Sundays leading up to Christmas Day. This year, the first Sunday of Advent is Nov. 27.

Advent is not just an observance of past events where the Israelites were waiting for the Messiah, but it’s also an anticipation of Christ’s return, or 2nd “coming.” We wait for the ultimate fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises, when “the wolf will lie down with the Lamb, death will be swallowed up, and every tear will be wiped away.” Advent highlights the amazing story of God’s redemption plan!

In addition to our normal Sunday worship times, this year we will have a “Hanging of the Greens” service on the evening of Sun., Nov. 27 (6-7 pm). This will be a special worship time using scripture readings, singing and prayers as the church is decorated for the Advent/Christmas season.

We will use the traditional themes of Love, Joy, Peace, and Hope for our Advent Sunday candle lighting litanies. The Advent sermons will be based primarily on Luke 1 & 2. Our Christmas service will take place on Sunday, December 25 @ 9:30 a.m.

We are looking forward to celebrating this special time of the year with you.

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Alliance; and Fathers Gebremedhin Gebregiorsis and Tekleab Menghisteab, two Orthodox priests arrested allegedly for being involved in the Church’s ‘Medhane Alem’ (‘Saviour of the World’) Bible study and renewal movement. An estimated 500 Christians are currently incarcerated because of their faith, including Father Kiros Tsegay – an American citizen who has ministered in Florida for 25 years. Father Kiros was arrested in October 2021 while visiting Eritrea to organise a memorial service to mark the first anniversary of his mother’s death.

For prisoners – be they political or religious dissidents, or citizens fleeing compulsory and unending military service – conditions are extremely harsh. While many prisoners – complete with lice, festering wounds, diarrhea and various infectious diseases – are held in overcrowded cells, others are held in shipping containers or underground pits. Slave labour and torture are routine. Many prisoners simply disappear. The repression is such that Eritrea has earned the reputation of being ‘Africa’s North Korea’.

Much like North Korea’s President Kim Jong-un, Eritrea’s President Isaias Afwerki has long tied the regime’s extreme and brutal repression to the lack of peace, the perpetual threat from across the border, and the need to remain on a permanent war footing. However, now that Eritrea’s (and Ethiopia’s) greatest enemy – the Marxist-Leninist separatist and expansionist Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) – has been defeated on the battlefield, Afwerki no longer has any excuse. **However**, can a leopard change its spots? Of course not! Neither can Afwerki or the regime he leads change their wicked nature (see Jeremiah 13:23). Eritrea still needs a divine intervention.

Behold! The Son is Arriving!

(But not as the angel committee thought!)



**Friendship Class
Christmas Program**
December 12th, 2022
7:00 p.m.

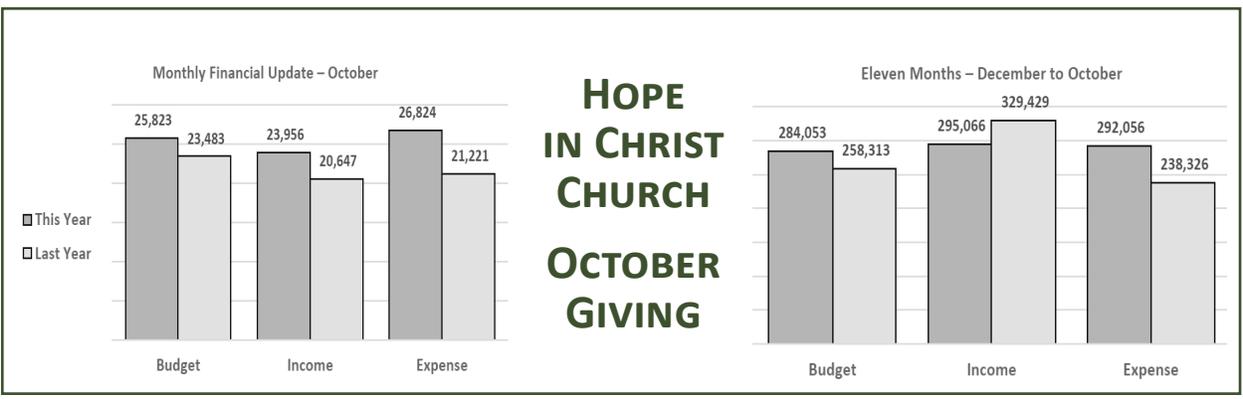


In October Hope in Christ Church provided 6 meals for 3 families in Bellingham and Ferndale. Our next opportunity to serve will be the week of January 23. Thank you to everyone who helped Family Promise families last year with meals and deliveries!

By Lorraine B

Family Promise started in Whatcom County 4.5 years ago. Since then 62 families have been helped, which includes 91 adults and 137 children. Services provided by Family Promise (a part of Interfaith Coalition) are:

- Homelessness prevention: Keeping families facing the loss of their housing in their home through rent assistance.
- Diverting people away from homelessness: Providing rental deposit and move-in cost assistance for families who have lost their home.
- Stabilization after homelessness: Ongoing support for families when they have graduated from Interfaith housing.





December 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 6:30 a.m. Men's Group 4:30 p.m. Men's Hop Heads United 7 p.m. Deacons Meeting	2	3
4 8:20 a.m. Prayer 9:30 a.m. Worship, Communion 11 a.m. Sunday School Noon Potluck Lunch	5 6:30 p.m. G.E.M.S.	6 12:15 p.m. Zoom Prayer 6:30-8:30 p.m. Boer/Hop Group	7 11:45 a.m. Elders Meeting	8 6:30 a.m. Men's Group 4:30 p.m. Men's Hop Heads United 7 p.m. Council Meeting	9	10
11 8:20 a.m. Prayer 9:30 a.m. Worship & Children's Christmas Program 7-9 p.m. Laninga Group	12 7:00 p.m. Friendship Christmas Program	13 12:15 p.m. Zoom Prayer	14 9:45 a.m. Women's Bible Study	15 6:30 a.m. Men's Group 4:30 p.m. Men's Hop Heads United	16 10 a.m. -4 p.m. Crafts with Darlys	17 10 a.m. -4 p.m. Crafts with Darlys
18 8:20 a.m. Prayer 9:30 a.m. Worship 11 a.m. Sunday School 12 p.m. Vitality Team	19 9:30 a.m. Retired Women's Coffee 6:30 p.m. G.E.M.S.	20 12:15 p.m. Zoom Prayer 6:30-8:30 p.m. Boer/Hop Group	21 6:00 p.m. Ladies' Dinner Out	22 6:30 a.m. Men's Group 4:30 p.m. Men's Hop Heads United	23	24
25 CHRISTMAS 8:20 a.m. Prayer 9:30 a.m. Worship	26	27 12:15 p.m. Zoom Prayer	28	29 6:30 a.m. Men's Group 4:30 p.m. Men's Hop Heads United	30	31

Happy Birthday!

06 Melissa K
08 Eliana R
09 Maggie S
13 Scott M
14 Yvonne B

15 Sissy D
16 Darryl G
23 Grace M
24 Don R
27 Brenna K

28 Morgan R
29 Doug S
30 Helen B
30 Abigail M