

**Sunday Service at 10:25 AM
Streamed LIVE on [Facebook](#).**

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Homily (Invitation to Communion)

Sunday, May 2, 2021

Outdoor Worship on the Church Lawn
at

First Christian Church of Decatur, Georgia
James L. Brewer-Calvert, Senior Pastor

Thank you so much, Atlanta Musicians Orchestra.

--under the direction of my friend and yours, Dahlan Foah.

Thank you, Allison Woolridge, for your acapella solo.

We can hardly imagine how much practice it took to reach this point,

You practiced and prepared so hard to be here,

to share such beautiful music, to guide our souls to soaring,
and we are deeply grateful.

Let the Church say, "*Amen!*"

To all the folks on the church lawn and those worshipping online,
we are so glad you are participating.

As I said earlier, *Welcome Home!*

Robert Frost wrote, "*Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in.*"

"*Some folks make you feel at home,*" said Andrew Glasow.

"*Others make you wish you were.*"

We want you to feel and be at home here, in this safe place.

You belong.

You belong to God.

We speak this Word with confidence and authenticity,
with joy and sincerity

because we are intentional about offering ministry of hospitality,
which is something you and I glean
from the Creator, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Hospitality claims its roots, its foundation, in a Loving Creator.
Our Creator blessed the universe,
 spread far and wide the wonder of the stars
 and the wonders of atoms and cells and creatures of all sorts and sizes,
 crafted the Earth and blessed us with the breath of life.
Into this world we are charged with taking care of one another,
 with being hospitable,
 by welcoming the stranger
 and making room at the table for the lost, the last, the least.

The hospitality God wills into being takes practice.

Three of First Christian Church of Decatur's strengths
 we've identified and are honing
 are healing, hopefulness, and hospitality.
There are elements of healing, hope and hospitality
 in everything we do and share.

Our Sanctuary offers sacred space
 for worshipping God, building community,
 and grounding ourselves spiritually for life in the everyday.

The sanctuary nested our spiritual growth
 to covenant to become Open and Affirming,
 to support Black Lives Matter,
 to commit to be a pro-reconciling community of faith.

Even the architecture speaks volumes,
 the wings of the physical plant spread wide to love & welcome one and all
 like the open arms of Christ.

Our Decatur Toy Park across the street
 is a ministry of hospitality offered to the city.

On a family vacation to Alaska,
 at the base of Mt. Denali
 my wife Betty got to visiting with someone.

Found out she was also from Atlanta.

Small world.

Found out she brought her grandchildren to Decatur...to play in our park.

When you practice hospitality,
 you make a small world
 bigger and grander for everyone.

Our fellowship hall and rooms inside the building

host a dozen non-profits and musical lessons, recitals and concerts,
each of which is changing the world,
one life at a time.

Our gym got transformed into Decatur Makers Space,
where tools are shared in community;
here people build and create and repurpose.

Last spring Decatur Makers helped us build a Free Food Pantry,
which stands yonder by the sidewalk with a note that reads,
"Those in need, please take. Those with abundance, please give."
Most every single day someone is putting food on the shelves,
and most every single day a hungry body is being sustained.

We are in conversation about how and when to reopen our Chalice Thrift Store.
Talk about repurposing goods and lives!
Saturday, May 15 at 10 AM and Wednesday May 19 at 10 AM.
Come, join in an open conversation.
Your input is invaluable.

We mention these opportunities for grace and service and fun
because,
just as today's musicians practice their craft,
hospitality takes practice.

Being hospitable --
whether as an individual or a community of faith or a nation state --
doesn't just happen by wishing it to happen.

Being hospitable means making room
for those who might not look like you,
or think like you,
or act like you,
or smell like you,
or might not even like you –
and you may not like them.

Yet that is our calling, our challenge, our character.

Hospitality is a way of life.

Takes work,
takes passion,
takes preparation.

A ministry of hospitality takes a lot of practice,
sometimes getting it wrong,
sometimes making errors or detours,
sometimes needing to reboot, retool, reconfigure.

And yet, we persevere.

We discover the strength and sustenance we need from God,
who says that everyone belongs.

All this ministry we do – not my idea.

It's God's idea. God's dream. God's hope.

We draw deep upon the grace of God that emanates from this Table,
from this Sacrament,

a living, sacred reminder

of the Love that God has for us,

the Love we are to have for ourselves and one another.

Come to the Lord's Table; taste and see that God is good.