
Letters to a Young Episcopalian: Why is Hospitality So Central?

[Last week's letter](#)

[Back to all letters](#)

Dear Anna,

In your last note you asked why Episcopalian care so much about hospitality. Your questions takes me back to our discussion of the desert elders. They welcomed strangers as if Christ himself had knocked. Sometimes they left their prayers unfinished to tend to a guest, certain that love of neighbor was the truest prayer.

That spirit shapes us still. The Anglican imagination is analogical: we see God reflected in human faces, sacraments hidden in ordinary encounters. Hospitality is simply that imagination turned outward. Our nave is a guesthouse. Our Eucharist is a feast of welcome. When we say, "All are invited," it is not courtesy but conviction: Christ meets us in the stranger.

So when you greet someone at the church door, or pause to listen to a story you did not expect to hear, you are practicing monastic wisdom in parish life. Hospitality is not an extra. It is holiness.

Your affectionate uncle,
Ames