

ARE WE READY?

by Rev. Chad Delaney

In Genesis 18:1-15, we find Abraham recovering from surgery, resting under the oaks of Mamre, when he spots three strangers approaching. Despite his pain, he leaps up, runs to greet them, and offers them food, water, and a place to rest. Abraham's actions remind us that hospitality is a sacred act—one so important that he leaves his conversation with God to serve these strangers.

This story echoes a teaching shared by an 18th-century Rabbi named Schneur Zalman, who once stopped studying to soothe his crying grandson, reminding his son, “No matter how involved one is in an endeavor, however lofty it may be, one must never fail to hear and respond to the cry of a child in need.” True hospitality often asks us to set aside our own plans to meet the needs of others.

This Advent season, we prepare to welcome the greatest “unexpected guest” of all: the baby Jesus. Like others throughout the biblical story, we are invited to open our hearts, homes, and lives to any

who bear God's image. Together we are called to welcome any who have need. Hebrews 13:2 reminds us, “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so, some have entertained angels unawares.” Are we ready?

What if, in this Advent season, we welcomed Christ not only in our prayers and songs but in every act of love we extend to others? Each time we share kindness, we open a door for Jesus to enter again. Let our Advent preparation be a practice of hospitality, readying our hearts for the one who comes to us, often quietly and unexpectedly, even in the face of a stranger. May we be ready to greet him with open minds, open hearts, and open arms.

HOLY ONE, OPEN OUR HEARTS TO WELCOME YOU IN EVERY PERSON WE MEET. HELP US TO BE READY TO RECOGNIZE YOU IN THE FACES OF STRANGERS AND FRIENDS ALIKE. MAY OUR ACTS OF KINDNESS PREPARE A PLACE FOR CHRIST TO DWELL WITHIN EACH ONE OF US. AS WE PREPARE TO CELEBRATE YOUR COMING, MAY OUR LOVE, KINDNESS, AND HOSPITALITY REFLECT YOUR EXPANSIVE AND WELCOMING GRACE. AMEN.