

From Pastor Karen's Desk - October 2009

Seeing Through Guests' Eyes

It's been a month for guests around here. It changes how you see yourself, your home, and your community!

We've been hosting candidates for our open staff positions all through September (no news to share as of the newsletter deadline!). Believe me, we have been as concerned about making a good impression on them as they have been worried about making a good impression on us! What directions do we give them to find the church? Where should they stay? What should we feed them? Who can we introduce them to? How do we show off Wausau as a great place to live, and First UMC as a great place to be in ministry? It makes our efforts at improving our church hospitality – everything from signs to greeters to clean corners in the restrooms – have very concrete implications.

And Jerry and I and our families are hosting mutual friends from New Zealand early in October. We find ourselves asking similar questions, even if we don't have to impress Anne and Mike, and we don't expect to woo them to move here. But still we ask – What will we feed them (will Friday Fish Fries and cheese curds bring delight or indigestion)? What is interesting enough around here that will warrant a trip halfway around the globe? Even with fall colors, Rib Mountain and the Wisconsin River valley seem small and ho-hum compared to their scenery. Is my house clean enough for the boys to sleep on the floor, and do we have enough legos to keep them entertained? And, since the husband and wife are both clergy, will they like our church? Whether it's strangers or friends, we do want to make our guests happy.

It's exhausting, all this preparation for guests – but well worth it. It helps us figure out how to be our very best. We ought to entertain guests every week..... Oh wait! We do!