

Dear friends in ministry,

I read once a quote about leadership saying that we don't follow people because of what they *know* but because of how they make us *feel*.

Do we embody the extravagant welcome and hospitality we claim, or are they only words? Do we offer words of grace and healing that Jesus shared along his way? Do we feed and clothe, nurture and lift up the hurting people around us? Do we help people feel important in the life of the Body of Christ? Do people "feel the love" through our ministries?

The Salvation Army Center of Hope in Jefferson City strictly follows its rules of community formation and care. While they house and feed, train and support people in transition through difficult times, they also include all residents in the running of the ministry itself. They all know what a difference the ministry makes, and they take their turn cleaning, supporting, serving. They attend meetings and they gather to worship, for the sake of the community and the ministry they offer in Christ's name. Director Vicki Bullock not only knows a lot about the need for this ministry and how to get it done, she loves and lives with those she serves. They know it. They feel it. Everyone is important to making this a place of good news for the residents and the wider community. January 12th, they will distribute brand new blankets to all the 30-some current residents...blankets which were given by the outside community in response to the need being made known. It truly is a center for hope.

Our congregations could learn from this living of the good news. Every congregation is filled with treasure. Every person is important to the sharing of the good news. Everyone has something to offer another in Christ's name. Blessings to you as you discover how to become a center for hope.

And, please consider sending your testimony to me, that we might share it with our brothers and sisters in Christ who need encouragement in this way.

In Christ~~ Rev. Carole Barner, Congregational Vitality Initiative Coordinator
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