

Pastor's Blog

*Love *No Exclusions Apply*

I have to say that it has been so heartwarming to see our church's name with the phrase Love *No Exclusions Apply, popping up all over town! From the Green to the borders of our town—and even beyond—we are showing who we are and the message that we stand behind as a faith community.

As wonderful as it has been to see the signs popping up across town, however, I have to say that it was sad to see conversation about the sign pop up on social media—not in support, but rather with some suggesting the sign's message was divisive and with others wondering if it was politically motivated. Now what was interesting to see, in reading through those comments, was that some people assumed our words were aspirational—as if we really didn't mean, or really couldn't be, a church that loves all people without exclusions.

While I know we're not perfect—as we all have our moments in which love is not the first action we take or word that we say—I can say with confidence that we didn't have those signs made to show people what kind of community we're aspiring to be, because each and every week I have a front row seat to witness this church as the church we are actually *being* in the world:

- through the words we say, and mean, every Sunday morning: “No matter who you are, who you love, who you understand yourself to be, where you are on your journey of faith, or where you are worshiping from this morning, you are welcome with us here,”
- and then through the way we live out that welcome by engaging with all those who come through our doors;
- through prayers offered, rides given, meals baked, flowers delivered, cards sent, and so much more to those in need;
- through our service to those in need at South Park Inn in Hartford, Cornerstone in Vernon, and through Foodshare and the food pantry right here in town;
- through work beyond our building with Habitat for Humanity in Hartford, Deep Roots in Maryland, and through acts of service across to the elderly here in town;
- through those who serve at funeral receptions to help give grieving families a space to gather;
- through those who knit prayer shawls for the newly baptized and those working through challenging moments in their lives;
- through opening our doors and parking lot to the community during all events on the Green: Halloween, prom, the December light parade, and more;
- and in so many more ways that we could never fully capture in one short blog post!

Friends, I say all this because I am proud of who we are and what we stand for as a community—and I hope you are too. And if you are, then I hope you have planted that lawn sign with pride at your home. I hope you'll grab one of our stickers (on order!) and put it on your car or water bottle.

And I hope you will continue to do what we've done to show the town that this is who we are because we know that this is who God calls us to be.