

— WELCOME TO OUR CHURCH —

Three church members give a visitor a tour of the sanctuary. They point out things of interest with negativity and disdain, while the visitor sees the positive and hopeful side of things.

Actors: 3 long-standing church members, one visitor

Props: Bulletin board, Bible, cross

Member 1: Hi, welcome to our church! Are you a visitor today?

Visitor: Yes, I am.

Member 1: Welcome to our church! I'm glad you came today!

Visitor: Thanks, this looks like a nice place. Could you give me a little tour?

Member 1: Sure, what would you like to see?

Visitor: How about the sanctuary.

Member 1: Well, what do you know, here we are.

Member 2: You gotta love the old wooden pews, but kind of hard on the old bottom.

Member 3: Yeah, I'm thinking three words; hard, as, rocks.

Visitor: But just think how many people have sat in these pews over the years. I can really see the long tradition of faith in this beautiful place of worship.

Member 1: What would you like to see next?

Visitor: Those little things look interesting. *<points to audience>*

Member 1: What, the microphones?

Visitor: No, *those* little things. *<points to kids in audience>* They look interesting.

Member 2: Oh, yes, they are very interesting, actually, they can be a little distracting at times.

Member 3: Thinking three words here; noisy, wiggly, and mischievous.

Visitor: Hmm, I think those are great qualities to have. I see a bunch of wonderful kids who want to grow in their faith in Jesus. What else can you show me?

Member 1: Over here is our volunteer board. It's always full of jobs to do around church.

Member 2: There's never enough people to do everything. We need someone to organize it.

Member 3: Three words; volunteer, coordinator, needed.

Visitor: I think that's great! It shows how people can get involved here in lots of different ways to help other people. What else can you show me?

Member 1: You really need to see the congregation itself.

Member 2: Yeah, lots of issues going on there. It's a wild looking bunch if I ever saw one.

Member 3: Three words come to mind: cantankerous, persnickety, scallywags

Member 2: A few more choice words come to my mind, but I think I'll keep them to myself.

Visitor: I see a community of faithful people who are committed to God and each other. And your mission statement, "To grow in faith through Christian community for Christ's service." That really says it all. What else can you show me?

Member 1: Well, I suppose you should meet our pastor.

Visitor: Oh, yes. How is he?

Member 2: Oh, he likes to talk a lot. Just come Sunday morning and you'll see what I mean.

Member 3: Three words: traditional, German, Lutheran.

Visitor: I see a pastor who is faithful and committed to shepherding a flock of interesting and perhaps somewhat persnickety people. What else can you show me?

Member 1: Well, this is pretty important to us. The Bible.

Visitor: Wow, that's a really big Bible.

Member 2: It's got a lot of words, and no pictures in it at all.

Visitor: It says here, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever would believe in him, would not perish, but have everlasting life."

Member 3: Three words; John, three, sixteen.

Visitor: Wow, you are amazing! How do you do that?

Member 3: Three words; Wartburg, College, education.

Member 1: Let me show you one more thing. It's over here. *<walks to cross>*

Visitor: A cross, what's that?

Member 1: Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, died on a cross.

Member 2: It was a horrible death, and a humiliating way to die.

Visitor: I see an empty cross, and a sign of God's amazing love for us. I see a symbol of our faith, and a call to discipleship too.

Member 3: I'm thinking three words; grace, forgiveness, hope, and life.

Member 1: Hey that's four words, not three.

Member 1: I know, and there's so many more, like freedom, truth, mercy, sacrificial love, prophecies fulfilled, answered prayers, victory over death, and eternal life.

Visitor: Well, thanks for taking me on a tour of your church.

Member 1: Sure, thanks for asking.

Member 2: Yes, it was fun to walk around with you and see things with new eyes.

Visitor: I think this looks like a wonderful church to belong to. You should be thankful for what God is doing here in your midst.

Member 1: Thanks for visiting.

ALL: *<to audience>* Welcome to our church!

Scripture: Hebrews 13:1 "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing, some people have welcomed angels without knowing it."

Message: We belong to a loving, caring Christian community of friends and family members. We should remember that an important part of our church's mission is to welcome visitors into our community. As we do this we are following Jesus' way of loving and caring for all people. Through our hospitality we can bless others and receive so much more in return. May our congregation be a welcome place of love and hospitality to all.

Questions: How welcoming do you think your church is to outsiders? What could you do to offer even more hospitality to visitors? How can your congregation take its mission and ministry outside the wall of your church?

Prayer: Thank you, God, for our congregation and all the blessings we have received through its mission in our community and the world. May our church be a warm and inviting place where all are welcomed. Amen.