



“The term ‘radical hospitality’ is redundant because hospitality is already radical. It might be a gentle radicality at times, but it’s still radical and counter-cultural in a context where hostility – on a spectrum from indifference or open aggression – is the norm.”  
– Jayme Reaves, *Hospitality as Ground for the Good*

## STUDY GUIDE GEEZ 55: ENTERTAINING ANGELS

### ABOUT GEEZ

*Geez* magazine is a quarterly, nonprofit, ad-free, print magazine about social justice, art, and activism for people at the fringes of faith in both Canada and the U.S.

Our aim is to nurture a community of faith-oriented folks that are concerned about the environment, peace, racial and gender justice, decolonization, and other social concerns. At best, we offer a prophetic and provocative voice to the institutional church and a pastoral presence to those laboring at the front lines of social change.

The work of *Geez* is storytelling. We believe that stories are crucial to the ongoing struggles for justice – that they are part of what sustains us, gives us rest, and offers hope. Stories come out of movement and can be gifted back to movement. *Geez* is committed to not just raging against oppression, but offering the hope, beauty, and power alive in local communities doing their work.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE ISSUE

**Geez 55: Entertaining Angels** provides the warmth of a winter welcome while challenging us all to open our doors a little wider.

This issue focuses on the ancient tradition of hospitality. It uplifts the power, beauty, and simplicity of sharing apple crisp or living in communities of care and justice. Yet it also dives into the very challenging legacies of white, Christian, colonialism which threw out all the rules of what it meant to be a good guest. This history continues to play out in our politics and churches today. Historically, small communities who stood with courage in the midst of dangerous times opened their homes to those who were fleeing persecution. Today, we read these words in the midst of a global refugee crisis. A wall is being constructed on the southern U.S. border and children are being held in cages. Many others throughout our countries are without stable homes and safe places to take refuge. In these times, we believe it is urgent to ask: who are our communities and where is our courage to open wide our doors and hearts?

 **Page 6** – Mouse Traps and Spare Rooms by Lydia Wylie-Kellermann

*Geez Out Loud* is a listening series that offers audio accompaniment by the author for select stories, [geezmagazine.org/geez-out-loud](http://geezmagazine.org/geez-out-loud). Look for the icon to identify pieces with a listening component.

### HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

Whether you are in conversation with folks in a classroom, at a dining room table, or on the internet, be mindful that this work is not just intellectual but work of the heart. Be gentle with one another along our different journeys.

**Part 1:** Welcome and Be Welcomed

**Part 2:** It's Messy Work

**Part 3:** Grounded in Community

**Part 4:** Take a Risk

**In the classroom:** Instructors may assign readings and work through the material in parts. Discussion questions can be moderated aloud or assigned as reflection questions.

**In a book group:** Form a circle of trusted friends and work through the material together. Read excerpts out loud, share reactions, allow the questions to steer the conversation when needed.

**On social media:** Either access a trusted forum or group or tag friends and organizations with whom you wish to spark discussion. Share the articles that are accessible online and pull out your favorite quotes from the print issue. Work through the questions with affirmations and challenges that create room for growth. Resist a social media culture of invisibility, arrogance, and attack.

**In your journal:** Use the study guide questions as prompts to dig deeper into the issue through focused reflections.

For copies of *Geez 55: Entertaining Angels*, visit [geezmagazine.org/store](http://geezmagazine.org/store).

## PART I WELCOME AND BE WELCOMED

### RECOMMENDED READING

**Page 8** – Waawiyatanong: A Detroit Land Acknowledgement by *Antonio Cosme*

**Page 11** – Hospitality as the Ground for the Good by *Jayme R. Reaves*

**Page 16** – “Your Nations Cannot Contain Us,” 2017, Digital Large Format Print by *Jess X. Snow*



**Page 34** – “Honey, I’m Home,” August 2019, Screen Print on cream paper, 12”x18” by *Jess X. Snow*



**Page 35** – Guest Ethics by *John Bergen*

### DEFINITIONS

**Land acknowledgement:** a statement that recognizes the history of a place and the relationship that exists between land and Indigenous Peoples

**Colonization:** the imperialist expansion of Europe into the rest of the world over the last four hundred years, resulting in systems of control that include settler occupation of the land, brutal subjugation of Indigenous peoples, and exploitation of resources

**Hospitality:** welcoming, offering generosity, or sharing resources with guests, visitors, or strangers

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. As people living in Canada and the United States, how did you or your ancestors come to this land? What is your family’s history of being guest or host?
2. How was hospitality taught to you as a child?
3. In your everyday life, are there places you regularly take the role of host? Are there places you regularly take the role of guest? Does one feel more comfortable and natural for you, and if so, why?
4. In this historical, global moment, who is looking for hospitality? What does that community and struggle look like in your local context?

### ACTIVITY

1. Do some research and write your own land acknowledgement for the place you currently live or the place you grew up.
2. John Bergen writes, “When I am a guest, I often catch myself trying to make hospitality an exchange of services. I struggle to accept others taking care of me.” Next time you are a guest, notice if these feelings are coming up for you. Take a moment to journal about the feelings.

## PART 2 IT’S MESSY WORK

### RECOMMENDED READING

**Page 17** – Surviving Southern Hospitality by *Ingrid Cruz*

**Page 18** – The Cognitive Dissonance of Southern Hospitality by *Britney Winn Lee*

**Page 7** – Elderword by *Jeff Dietrich*

**Page 30** – “Ambassadors of the gods,” 2005, watercolour, 8” x 11” by *Willa Bickham*



**Page 31** – Christian Mission “Disrobed” by *Ched Myers*

**Page 52** – “Story of Jean,” 2006, watercolour, 8” x 11” by *Willa Bickham*



### DEFINITIONS

**Missionary:** agents sent cross-culturally to serve God: at best providing welcome, spiritual guidance, healthcare, and education; at worst serving as a tool for colonization by encouraging local people to adopt Western clothing, practices, and values, while stealing their land and resources.

**Microaggressions:** Everyday actions or behaviours, often subtle, that are derogatory or discriminatory to folks with marginalized identities.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Dietrich is open about his mistakes and says he has “done a bad job of hospitality for the last 50 years.” Does a fear of making mistakes hold you back from engaging in more radical hospitality? What possibilities would be opened if you could release some of that fear?
2. Myers explores the complex tradition and history of hospitality when it comes to Christianity. How do we reconcile this history? How do we see these violent trends continue today in churches?
3. We are let into Cruz’s feelings of exclusion in the U.S. South and Lee’s process of reckoning with responsibility. Who are voices in our lives who hold a different perspective (race, class, gender, sexuality, citizenship, religion)? Can we create safe space to ask questions knowing that it is messy, human, and beautiful work?

### ACTIVITY


1. Reflect on Lee’s piece. Without fixating on political correctness, write about your own blind-spots when it comes to hospitality and welcoming the stranger?
2. Attend a worship service of a religion (or denomination) different than your own. Talk to someone afterwards. Pay attention to what comes up for you.
3. Find out if there is a Catholic Worker house or L’Arche community in your area. Reach out to ask if you can visit or help.

## PART 3 GROUNDED IN COMMUNITY

### RECOMMENDED READING

Page 11, 19, 29, 37, 41 – Recipes

Page 20 – Back When Friendsgiving Was a New Word by Brad Aaron Modlin

 Page 24 – Bigger Love by Peterson Toscano

Page 26 – Nuns & Nones at the Border by Adam Horowitz and Rachel Plattus

Page 50 – Being and Rest: A Critique of (Self-) Care as Praxis by tan ning-sang

Page 39 – “Justice of Eating,” 2008, watercolour, 8” x 11” by Willa Bickham



Page 42 – “Built on Accountability” by AEB Art



## PART 4 TAKE A RISK

### RECOMMENDED READING

Page 8 – Elderword by Rose Berger

Pages 13, 17, 22, 29, 41, 53 – In Their Shoes Series

Page 22 – Dangerous Hospitality by Jayme R. Reaves

Page 23 – We Are Not Anti-Police but Pro-Community

Page 40 – Transformations of Movements, Conversions of Heart by Maria Bergh

Page 49 – “All Life on Earth” by Jess X. Snow



Back cover – “Rise with Love of Refugees” by Jess X. Snow



### DEFINITIONS

**Intersectionality:** A term originally coined by civil rights activist Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989. Now often used to refer to “the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups.”

**Sabbath:** A traditional Jewish practice involving rest and worship on the seventh day of the week, still practiced in many forms today among Jewish and Christian communities.

**Praxis:** The ways that theories or ideological values are embodied and applied in action

**Refuge:** Shelter or protection from danger, discomfort, or distress.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is your experience of the connection between food and hospitality? Is there a particular experience that made you feel very welcomed or excluded by the presence of food?
2. What communities or spaces in your life offer you rest and refuge? What factors contribute to their ability to do so?
3. How do risks feel lighter when you ground yourself in community and hold the work with other people?

### ACTIVITY

1. Try a recipe. Invite folks over or drop food off for someone who has been struggling and needs a little love.
2. Take sabbath. Whatever that means to you – turn off your screens, go outside, light a candle, find some silence.

### DEFINITIONS

**Anti-racism:** the active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably.

**Personalism:** A philosophy taken on by the Catholic Worker movement, aiming to center the freedom and dignity of each person in any given encounter.

**Police Abolition:** Acknowledgement of the violent, oppressive effects of police forces, while striving to dismantle systems and create community-based processes for transformative and restorative justice.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Jayme Reaves encourages us to reflect on these uncomfortable questions:
  - a. Who gets sacrificed by our practice of hospitality?
  - b. What risks are we willing to take to welcome the other?
  - c. Are some people’s lives and livelihoods worth more than others?
  - d. What hostility lurks in our own hospitable practice?
  - e. What kind of society are we willing to commit to and embody for change?
2. Would you consider opening up more of your space, your home, your house for hospitality?
3. What are ways communities can stand together for hospitality like the statement on page 23?

### ACTIVITY

1. Pick one of the “In their Shoes” and write the author’s next journal entry. Make up the details. Feel the life that this ordinary person made in order to welcome under dangerous circumstances.
2. Maria Bergh’s community took the great risk of naming racism within the Catholic Worker movement. It forced an important conversation. What institutions, organizations, or communities are you part of that are living in contradiction with their values? (Is your church not welcoming to LGBTQ folks? Does your university prevent staff from unionizing?) Take the risk of calling out injustice?