

Joseph & Mary's Hospitality

If you think airport security is strict, try visiting a newborn baby in the hospital. Doors lock, alarms are set, contact precautions are in effect. The father is usually standing guard to screen any guests. There are reasons for this, but I can guarantee the shepherds who had arrived to see the newborn Christ would have been summarily turned away. Somebody call security!

Mary and Joseph received their scruffy guests. The vulnerability of Jesus first moments of life are touching. Modern fears worry over how strangers could harm him. Let's take a breath. They didn't harm anyone. They were there at the invitation of God, though the parents didn't know that. Poor Mary's mother was not there. Nor a well-meaning midwife to block the way saying, "I'm sorry, family and close friends only!"

Luke 2:17 says the shepherds saw baby Jesus. That means that Joseph and Mary after the most harrowing night of their lives, welcomed the shepherds into their crude borrowed shelter. This means Mary would have had to un-swaddle those swaddling clothes in which he was hastily wrapped. Who knows, perhaps Jesus had arrived prematurely; his parents certainly seemed unprepared.

After such struggle, would you feel like receiving guests? It's a small peek into the guilelessness of this young couple. They were open to an immediate visit. And by the local shabby shepherds. Of all the people God could have sent to first lay eyes on the hope of the world, they were his choice. Their commonness and poverty showed that this Savior would belong to everyone. God chose well. Immediately the shepherds went out and told everyone, praising God for what they had seen.

Unselfconscious hospitality, devoid of social fear and receptive to fellow humans will leave you feeling human again. With all of our security and relating through screens, we've lost the openness of Mary and Joseph's little family. If they could do it on their roughest day, we can manage it too. Fancy home or crude shelter, hospitality has always been a sign of God's holy people. And it's right there in the Christmas story.

Mark

Our Christmas Party is 6:00PM Tonight

The theme is: *"In the Meadow We Can Build a Snowman."*

A sign-up sheet for food is posted, and . . .

Sign-up to be in the TALENT SHOW

Fill a Stocking for the Women's Shelter for domestic abuse victims. A wish list is pinned inside each Stocking which must be...*returned to Kathy by Wednesday, Dec. 20th* or the resident will not get a stocking. ***There are still 4 Residents who's Stockings were not chosen***

Candlelight Christmas-Eve Service is NEXT

Sunday: Dec. 24th, 5:00—5:40 PM. This brief, meaningful time of worship focuses on Christ who set aside his crown and laid down his life for you.

Youth Group: Tonight 6PM Join in the Christmas Party. Then **Friday Dec. 22, 7-9PM** we will make cookies for the upcoming *"Candlelight Christmas Eve Service"*.

"Giving Tree" & Christmas Cards:

- 1. Giving Tree:** Thank you for taking all of the cards. Please make sure to bring those gifts. See Karen or Donna.
- 2. Christmas Cards:** to people in our church can be placed in the box in the lobby. Our kids will deliver them!

Susan Gill's New Email: Suzie7966@aol.com

Our "January Month of Prayer & Fasting" Calendar is Posted! Just put your anonymous check-mark on the day you will fast and pray for the church. This is how we start the New Year!

Next Year's Monthly Volunteer List is Up!

Children's "Treasure Chest" Needs RE-Stocking: in our church lobby, so if you have any happy meal toys or small toys/books that you can donate, **give them to Karen.**

Haircuts for Missions: January 13th.

Today's Worship Leaders

Worship Leader: Gerry Hogan

Welcome & Scripture: Bret Goen (1 John 4:9)

Opening Prayer: Jack Swinehart

Lord's Supper: Tony Sr., Darren Mc, John Corbett, Ben

Scripture Before Message: Ethan Francoeur (John 1:10-14)

Announcements & Closing Prayer: Tony Ceraso Jr.

Greeters: Rich Fabi, Jonathan Cook, Sandie Fabi, Pat Connelly

Nursery Wini & Elaine Next Week: Sandra M. & Layla

Orange: Cleaning Team Dec. 20-23 Tony & Fay Coordinate

OUTREACH/MINISTRY

Mark Finn – Minister

Church Office- (856) 854-0197

ELDERS:

Rick Boyle (856) 986-4876

Tony Ceraso, Jr. (856) 278-6276

Bret Goen (856) 996-5267

Howard Mansdoerfer (609) 790-9969

Worship 110

Bible Class..... 62

Wednesday PM 26

Contribution **\$4,572**

Budget Goal **\$4,260**

Daily Bible Readers: 24

Collingswood Church of Christ

Church Website: www.ccc123.org

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"Now faith is being **sure** of what we hope for and **certain** of what we do not see." (Hebrews 11:1)

