

Writing Checks: Scorekeeping Notes that Mean Nothing

Every March I throw out my outdated financial papers. I've been rifling through stacks of old checks that have outlived their five-year currency as relevant financial records. Written in my hand and mostly that of my wife are the mundane transactions of our lives seven, eight, and ten years ago. Checks that moved from our hand to processing centers, banks, other states, scanned, stamped front and back and sent back to us again. It's a paper porthole to our lives then. Lots of monthly bills, lots of church contributions and charities, some retirement fund contributions.

This was following the rules, doing right. Responsible rectangles with black squiggly lines that meant we were adults. Now I'm ten years older shuffling, rummaging, hoping some clue will shake loose. Nothing shakes loose. Just an indistinct mosaic of obligations. Is there any lesson? I can't see any. We wrote on these little notes and sent them out everywhere and they were gathered up and sent back to us. And ten years later I search them and finding nothing substantial, throw them away. They once stood for something. It was a way of keeping score between us with our little pile of money and other people's piles of money. Only there were no piles. Just black squiggly lines on these little notes.

And I'm distressed that my non-existent pile of money called retirement is a third less than it was one year ago. I'm not a third less the size I was. My house is still here though the weather may have worn away one one-millionth of an inch from its surface. The sun hasn't shrunk nor the energy of our neighbor's young children playing in the yard. Have I believed in a monster that's not there? What is the worry?

“Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.”

--Proverbs 23:4-5

“I tell you, do not worry about your life.... But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.”

--Luke 12:22, 31

Mark

Today: **Praise God for our many ladies who are BUILDING their FAITH at our “Ladies Retreat”!**

Tonight 6:00 PM, The Young Adults: meet at the Cooper's home in Pitman. **Carpooling from our building is at 5:30.** See Matt Fort for details.

Wednesday Bible Class: “The Letters of 1 & 2 Peter” led by Matt Fortunato in the Auditorium.

Friday Everyone is Invited to Join the Youth Group to see a new Christian movie, **“To Save A Life”** (rated PG-13). It will be playing at the UA in Washington Twp. (Black Horse Pike and Tuckahoe Rd.)

Saturday

✓ Haircuts for Missions: Please sign-up for your time

✓ Community Movie Night Here:

Invite friends This Saturday...

5:00 PM we will be showing Beauty and the Beast

7:30 PM we will show Star Wars

Saturday Turn Your **CLOCKS AHEAD** before bed!

Today's Worship Leaders

Worship Leader: Gerry Hogan

Main Prayer: Scott Schoener **Closing Prayer:** Matt Fortunato
Lord's Supper: Bill Gill, Rick Boyle, Steve Lucas, Justin Henderson
Greeters: Bill Gill, Pam Goen, Lillian Nuñez, Jack Swinehart

LOCAL OUTREACH/MINISTRY

Mark Finn - Evangelist
Matt Fortunato - Associate Minister
Church Office- (856) 854-0197

ELDERS:

Rick Boyle (856-986-4876)

Tony Ceraso, Jr.

Jack Swinehart

Worship..... 110

Sun. Bible Class 72

Contribution..... **\$5,038**

Budget Goal \$4,175

Purple Action Team cleans this week. **Scott & Chris** lead.

Hospitality

More than 150 years ago, Alexis de Tocqueville observed a tendency in the U.S. toward an individualism “which disposes each citizen to isolate himself from the rest of his fellows and to withdraw into the circle of family and friends.” In North America and Europe, hospitality has become increasingly a commercial concept.

Our present period seems preoccupied with individual autonomy and the prosperity of family and friends. Into this atmosphere come biblical texts that speak of love (philoxenia) of strangers and the meaning of the New Testament word, which is translated “hospitality.” In Luke 9:58, Jesus enters upon the scene as a guest in need of hospitality. He has nowhere to lay his head. On another level, in Luke 7:36-50, Jesus is the supreme host. At the home of Simon the Pharisee, Jesus appears first in the role of a guest. But as the story moves on, he is the one who takes charge and hosts the occasion.

Someone has said we all fall somewhere between Martha Stewart and the person who has the pizza place listed on speed dial. Entertaining says, “I want to impress you with my beautiful home, my clever decorating and my gourmet cooking.” Hospitality says, “This is not mine. It is a gift from God, and I’ll use it as he desires.” Hospitality may suggest a place of rest from our labors and journeys, a place that is not our home but nevertheless enables us to feel as comfortable as Paul felt in the home of Rufus’ mother (Rom. 16:13).

Entertaining always puts things before people. Hospitality puts people before things.

Jesus ate with outcasts. Paul and Luke took strong stands on behalf of those relegated to the position of second-class citizens in the church. We miss out on this fullness of life if we limit our partnerships to those who most resemble ourselves.

The hospitality we have talked about has largely been in the home, but there are many ways to show hospitality, such as at church. A little boy came home from his first day at Sunday school, and his mother asked him how he liked it. The child replied, “I hated it. They put me in a room full of children all by myself.”

The most sobering thought and the most powerful motivation for extending hospitality that we have in scripture is found in Matt. 25:31 at the judgment scene: “Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.”

Finally, in Rev. 3:20, Jesus says, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”

---Annie May Alston Lewis

Collingswood Church of Christ

Church Website: www.ccc123.org

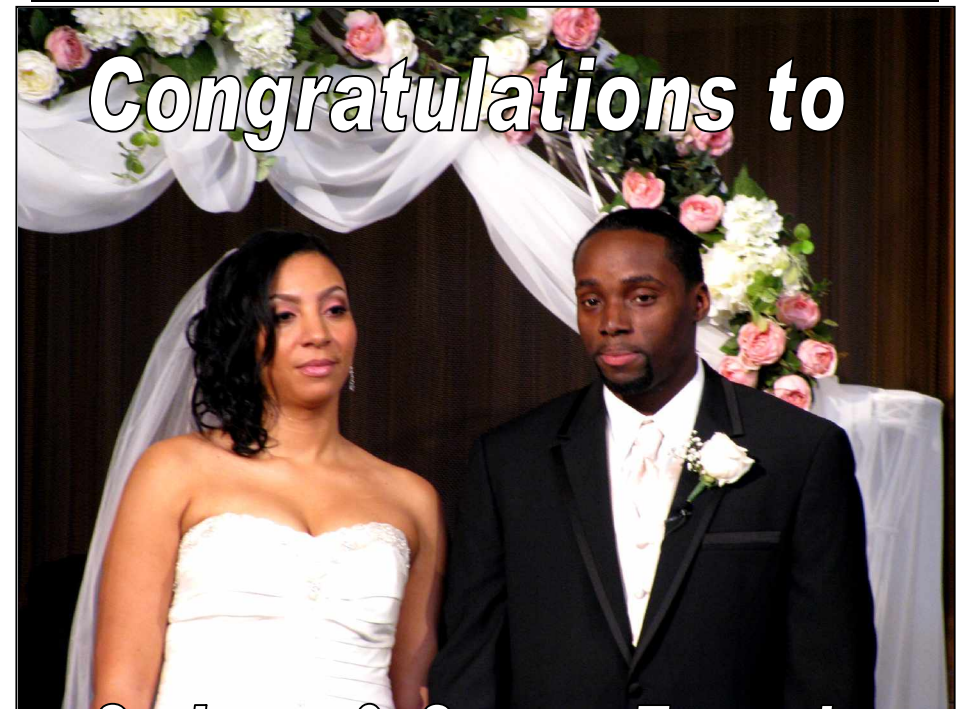
300 White Horse Pike

Collingswood, NJ 08107

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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)



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