

“All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, for he himself will say: I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Matt 25:35). Proper honor must be shown to all.” ~ Chapter 53, Rule of St. Benedict

### **Set the stage.**

Christmas worship services are full of first-time guests and those who might tentatively stay awhile. There may not be a lot of time at these services to get to know someone new, but there is ample opportunity to set the stage for further conversations. When we work to create a physically welcoming space and welcome all guests warmly, those next conversations will flow more easily.

### **Can your guests find their way to the pews? Or to the bathrooms?**

Several years ago, Scott Gunn created a checklist of short- and long-term tasks to [prepare your church building for guests](#). Each suggestion is a physical activity that also asks church leaders to think about what our buildings say, even when we are not available to speak for them.

### **Invitation, follow-through, and appreciation are not obsolete pleasantries!**

Carolyn Chilton offers a [Christmas Eve checklist](#) for churches, from social media through nursery care to thanking everyone who helped make the service special.

### **The attitude of church leadership is everything. And it starts with expecting guests.**

Our webinar [Welcoming Visitors](#), with Greg Millikin and Diane Young, is recorded and available to listen to! Greg, Diane, and Keith offer resources that are linked within the webinar slides.

### **Leaders cannot welcome alone! Intentionally ask church members to help welcome your guests.**

The United Methodist Church offers several concrete ways that [everyone can get into the spirit](#) of welcoming guests. These suggestions, like most, do double-duty of helping even old-timers to get to know one another better: greet everyone within 10 feet of you; speak with 3 people you do not know.

### **Guests will surely be at your Christmas Eve service.**

As Scott says in another [post on welcoming guests](#), “Our task is to be who we are and to welcome people as we would welcome Christ. Closely related to that, we need to make sure we’re not creating needless barriers to the Holy Spirit’s work in calling people.” Let us

welcome our guests as we would welcome the Christ Child.

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