



MILLVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Happy New Year

Refuge Part 2

Read Romans 8:31 and 32.

Echoing Psalm 46 Paul, in Romans Chapter 8, talks about refuge.

In verse 31 Paul declares "God Is For Us."

**God is for us.
Let those words sink in. God is not against us.
It is power of Satan that is against us.
There is no better thought than to know that
God is for us, His people.
God is on our side - God stands behind us.
Who or what can possibly stand against us
since God is for us?**

**How do we know that God is for us?
How can we have this confidence?**

**The answer is in verse 32 when Paul says: He
who did not spare his own Son but gave him up
for us all, how will he not also with him
graciously give us all things?
This is how we can know that God is for us.
God did not spare his own Son, but gave him
for our redemption.**

**There is nothing greater God could have done to
prove that he is for us.
If God was willing to give His Son for us how
will He hold anything else back?
God did not hold back his Son.
He will surely not hold back anything else.**

**Remember the remnant finds strength and
protection in the refuge of God
The mission of the remnant is to proclaim
revival**

Next month we start our study of revival.

**Why Nobody Wants To Come To Church
Anymore by Thom & Joani Schultz**

A Synopsis by Ed Thornton

Introduction

**There is no easy way to say this. The American
Church is broken. Yet there is an abundance of
hope things can change.**

**Chapter 1: It Was Clear Something Had Gone
Terribly Wrong**

**Church attendance is shrinking. While 40% of
Americans say they attend church every week,
the actual number is more like 20%. Four out
of five Americans say they are sure God exists
and identify themselves with a faith group. But
less than half of them ever attend church.
Every year more than 4,000 churches close
their doors compared to approximately 1,000
new, mostly very small, churches are started.**

**So why does nobody want to go to Church
Anymore?**

The church needs a wakeup call. We, as a church, need to admit we do not look that good. When others see us they are not attracted to us and wonder why we don't' make some changes. Admit the church is broken (the thesis of the authors of this book).

So, why do we care?

About 20 years ago the answer to "fixing" the church was Christian education. People began experiencing the Bible as they never had before. It was a mini revolution. But now we realize that focus was wrong. Faith is not a subject to be taught. Faith is a relationship to be experienced. Once you understand that, our view of what happens at church changes. And it opens doors we never knew existed.

Chapter 2 Why Aren't They Coming?

Four reasons:

1. "I feel judged."

87 % of Americans label Christians as judgmental.

2. "I don't want to be lectured."

More than ever today people want to participate in the discussion of God, faith, and the Bible.

**3. "Church people are a bunch of hypocrites."
85% of Americans make this claim.**

4. "Your God is irrelevant to my life. But I'd like to know there is a God and he cares about me."

Most people do not experience God in a typical church service.

If this picture is correct where do we start?

The facts are people have stop coming to church because they have negative perception of the church. They have real concerns and issues that church today does not deal with. Yet

people are spiritually hungry. They want to grow closer to God.

Is it possible to create a church environment where people truly experience God all the time? To answer that question we as a church have to acknowledge we have to make some changes.

Where do we start?

So what to people really want out of church?

A Gallup survey, after extensive study uncovered the six needs of Americans- the need:

1. To believe life is meaningful and has a purpose

2. For a sense of community and deeper relationship

3. To be listened to and to be heard

4. To feel one is growing in faith

5. To be appreciated and respected

6. For practical help in developing a mature faith.

So one of the first things we need to do is to learn about the power of experience.

Our experiences actually form our beliefs which then form our actions, followed by results.

Because the church, at its core, is people who claim to follow Jesus "regular people" perceive "church people" through their experience of interaction with "church people."

Today "regular people: experience six types of churches:

1. The Police Department – this church makes sure people follow the rules, a long list of rules.

2. The Political Action Committee (PAC) – social issues dominate the agenda and prime responsibilities of these churches.

3. The Theater – it delivers dazzling, orchestrated, crowd pleasing, seat filling, and highly scripted, rehearsed shows.

4. The Mortuary – they are solemn, serious, and not fun. They stress to somber aspects of worship and faith.

5. The Seminary – teaching the truth has become more important than living the truth. Information is not destination. Relationship with God is the key to growing faith.

6. The Museum – these exist to preserve the memories and traditions of the past. It reminds people of days gone by.

Because people experienced one of these six types of churches they have left the church. There are two responses people experience with the “current church” There are those who voted with their feet. They are called the church “declined”. But not everyone has walked away. Some people feel very comfortable with the status quo; these are the church “inclined.” There is another group - the PIBOS. They are the Present In Body Only (PIBOS). They quietly attend church, say little, look a bit detached, and leave quietly after the service.

Now What?

The rest of this book reveals a bold new experiment that can forever change the way we think about church.

Next month Chapter 3: A Bold New Experiment.

Ed

Hello Friends,

Welcome to 2016 and our first full year of ministry together! I am very excited and hopeful about what this year has in store for MUMC. We have grown and maintained many good and uplifting ministries in our short time together so far. Our service to the Kingdom of God can only deepen inside of our walls and

grow beyond them from here! It's my hope that in these winter months we can be in a time of discernment about how to best serve and reach out to the community around us. We have a few months to pray and plan before everyone starts coming back home from wherever they're spending the winter.

It's with that in mind that you find something special on the front of the Dove besides my usual article. Ed Thornton will be writing up chapter summaries every month for the book we've been reading for Wednesday mornings, *Why Nobody Wants to Go to Church Anymore: And 4 Acts of Love That Will Make Your Church Irresistible* by Thom and Joani Schultz. You'll see a lot of figures and statistics that may make things seem pretty grim and make you feel sad for the future of the church. This isn't included to make you feel down; it's to let you know what we may face and what people may think when you try to introduce them to Jesus or our church.

I also hope you read a lot of things that don't sound like our church, because that's an important distinction to make. There are a lot of people out there writing our story that don't have the full picture or right idea. There are many more people who make think negative and hurtful things about our church just because of what they've seen or heard elsewhere. If you were in worship on December 27th you heard me ask people to share what blessings or gifts from God they had received. I didn't necessarily include the church in my question, but the majority of answers were related to what folks experienced as a part of it. If you've been a part of our church for a while I'm sure you have a list of your own. Sharing Christ with people today and trying to show them the value, meaning, and purpose of the church today can be a complicated thing with many issues depending on who you're talking to. How we approach our outreach and

evangelism should be equally thought out and ready for anything. Despite that, the core of it all seems pretty simple to me. At the root of and through all things we need to be showing people our hearts as individuals and a church. In 2016 and beyond may we show the world our hearts that are saved by Christ's undeserved grace and being molded by God's unending love.

Blessings,
Pastor Brad

ALTAR FLOWERS

The "2016" altar flower calendar is placed up on the bulletin board. If you would like to have flowers on the altar, just sign up for the Sunday of your choice, in memory, honor, birthday, anniversary or any other occasion. They are only 20 dollars for a beautiful arrangement. After the service is over you get to take the flower home and enjoy them. Just give the message and money to me, either cash or a check made out to Millville U.M.C. when it is your Sunday. There are plenty of Sundays vacant, so please sign up.
Thank you,
Millie Cheek

Aging Faithfully

AGING FAITHFULLY invites you to **Cookie BINGO** at **10:00** on **Tuesday January 12th**. Bring along a friend or neighbor.

Hope you were there in December for the wonderful Christmas tunes of the **AARP Chorus**. Afterward, we enjoyed serving pizza to almost **60** guests.

We wish you a happy and healthy New Year!

Brad Bowers

Finance Committee

The finance committee met on **December 14th** and approved a bare bones budget for **2016** of **\$150,763**.

This amount was based on our actual income from **2015** with consideration for our contracted financial obligations. This budget does not include our mission giving which is a non-budget item. Mission giving is based solely on what we actual give and designate for missions.

This budget also does not address the need to insulate the church, update our very old and inefficient **HVAC** system or our inadequate audio-visual system, nor does it address the need to reduce our debt beyond our normal mortgage payment.

The committee feels we, as a congregation, need to address these issues separately. We also see a need to have a confidential pledge drive that will allow the membership to have time to pray and contemplate what their giving for the **2016** calendar year will be. Once the committee has a more reliable estimate of what funds will be available for the year, it can present a revised

budget that better addresses our needs than the present budget does.

Our giving for 2015 through the end of November is \$141,809. This is \$4,411 less than we gave through November in 2014.

There is good news. Our giving in for the first week of December was outstanding. If we can keep giving at that level we will be in good financial shape. However, for the year, our expenses are increasing while our giving has declined. Please pray about this and pray about what the Lord would have you give.

Larry Kaplan, Chairman

I wish for you a New Year filled with good, engulfed in serenity and happiness!

Let us not forget the hungry and homeless as we go into the coldest time of the year. Thank you all for a very giving 2015. I pray for the same in this New Year.

Marianne

Look For The God

In the New Year, let's resolve to get less stressed, upset, anxious about things over which we have no control. Lets have a narrower focus on our lives, loving and helping our family and friends, making our community a better place to live, to create peace and contentment.

In the New Year, let's resolve to pay less attention to depressing stories on TV, in magazines and newspapers, and to stop focusing on what we want that we haven't got, instead of appreciating the many blessings we do have.

In the New Year, let's look for the good. We may have to search through a mass of negative media, but the good is there, all around us.