



## THE PARISH PAPER July 2018

### **NEWCOMERS!!**

**In the 1950s, a new church start pastor challenged every member to invite two newcomers each month. Members enthusiastically committed to such a plan and the pastor's wife, feeling a special call to grow the children's ministry, regularly prayed for new babies to be part of the church's growth. No one was more surprised than she was when half of the young couples in the congregation became pregnant that year! Although this was not an intentional church growth strategy, growing families primarily fueled church growth in the 50s. Times have changed, and declining birthrates along with cultural shifts are part of shrinking church attendance numbers. These shifts involve the secularization of Sunday, longer work weeks, and two-earner households that reduce opportunities for family time. Additionally, a growing proportion of the population distrusts institutions or do not see the church as particularly relevant to their daily lives. Despite the trends toward secularization, eight out of ten adults in the U.S. believe in God.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, given a changing context, what methods play a role today in how people connect to God and grow in faith through a congregation? An examination of how to invite newcomers, how to inform them, and how to include them requires new reflection.**

### **How to Invite**

**Not all potential new members or participants come out of the same mold. Transplants that recently moved to the area and participated in a congregation in their former location tend to use a narrow search platform**

because they know what type of church they would like to attend. The more challenging newcomers to reach are those friends and relatives who live near the congregation but do not currently attend anywhere. And the most difficult population to reach are seekers and those with no church background or history. Still, research clearly demonstrates that at least half to two-thirds of adults find a church through personal invitations.<sup>2</sup>

[Read the full article here.....](#)



WE NEED TO UPDATE OUR  
CHURCH INFORMATION BROCHURE...  
"DESSERT, DISCO, AND DEUTERONOMY"  
IS NO LONGER A FELLOWSHIP EVENT!

*~~from the Vermont Conference Resource Center  
and your OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) contribution  
to the Vermont Conference which makes this newsletter  
and numerous programs available to you and your church.*

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